Imminent Communities: Transpacific Literary Form and Racialization, 1847-1920

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IMMINENT COMMUNITIES: TRANSPACIFIC LITERARY FORM AND RACIALIZATION, 1847 – 1920

By
Spencer Tricker

A DISSERTATION

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of the University of Miami
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the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

IMMINENT COMMUNITIES: TRANSPACIFIC LITERARY FORM AND
RACIALIZATION, 1847 – 1920

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This study examines literary contestations of an imperial discourse I call Pacific Imminence, a ruse of American exceptionalism that framed U.S. Pacific ascendancy as an impending development inaugurating global economic prosperity and a harmonious community of humankind. Through the continental imaginary of Manifest Destiny, most Americanist scholarship has viewed the Pacific as a peripheral site of empire-building in the long nineteenth century. By contrast, I argue that the Pacific uniquely catalyzed a globalist re-branding of U.S. imperialism that American and East Asian writers resisted through fictional forms. Such works undercut Pacific imminence by narrativizing the persistence of colonial antagonisms. In the first two chapters, I examine the Pacific fictions of James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville, tracing the roots of Pacific imminence to the antebellum era. In the third and fourth chapters, I analyze counter-narratives of fraught cosmopolitanism in the work of Filipino author José Rizal and Chinese-American author Sui Sin Far (Edith Maude Eaton).
Acknowledgements

In the spring of 2013, midway through my first year of coursework as a Ph.D. student, I had the good fortune to take John Funchion’s graduate seminar in U.S. Cosmopolitanisms. The experience was transformative. Most significantly, it prompted me to change my area of specialization to nineteenth-century American literature. John agreed to become my dissertation advisor and this project, while developing from my own family history of transpacific migrations, owes much to his intellectual rigor and unflagging mentorship. In 2015, John gave me the opportunity to fact-check the manuscript of his book Novel Nostalgias—a gesture expressive of his characteristic collegiality—and his meticulous scholarship serves as the primary model for the following study.

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INTRODUCTION:

Imminent Communities

The world is a Brotherhood today, and the nation which does not realize this is lacking in its appreciation of the true situation. The affair of one is the concern of all. None of the great nations of our time can escape their responsibility as world powers—they should not if they could; and each should strive to outdo the other in the promotion of universal peace and the general prosperity of all.

—Thomas J. O’Bien, U.S. Ambassador to Japan, 1911

The power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world.

—Albert J. Beveridge, “Our Philippine Policy” speech to the U.S. Senate, 1900

In early 2017, one of Donald Trump’s first acts as President was to pull the United States out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free-trade agreement fostered by the Obama administration as a key part of its pivot-to-Asia strategy. Regardless of its economic consequences, the move enacted a symbolic foreign policy shift from Obama’s economic globalism centered on the Pacific—a viewpoint publicly expressed in Hillary Clinton’s 2011 article for Foreign Policy, “America’s Pacific Century”—to Trump’s “America First” agenda of economic nationalism. Yet, as I will argue in the present study, to view this action as a decisive turn away from the Pacific would be to underestimate the longue durée of the United States’ relationship to the geographical

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1 According to the White House website, Trump’s America First foreign policy prioritizes “Trade Deals Working For All Americans.” “This strategy,” it explains, “Starts by withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and making certain that any new trade deals are in the interests of American workers.” (accessed 8-10-17)
magnitude of the Pacific Ocean, which, for more than 150 years, has been recurrently envisioned as the central theater in which the nation’s exceptional destiny becomes apotheosized as the consolidation of a global community.

Long before Secretary Clinton’s assertion that the United States “stands at a pivot point” on the edge of a new Pacific era, U.S. writers and political figures have been waxing lyrical on the prospects of a global Pacific directed by American hegemony (n. pag.). In 1852, Senator William Henry Seward (later Lincoln’s Secretary of State) situated his advocacy for the American whaling industry in terms of a markedly cosmopolitan vision. As he explained in his speech to Congress,

> Even the discovery of this continent and its islands, and the organization of society and government upon them, grand and important as these events have been, were but conditional, preliminary, and ancillary to the more sublime result, now in the act of consummation—the reunion of the two civilizations, which, having parted on the plains of Asia four thousand years ago, and having travelled ever afterwards in opposite directions around the world, now meet again on the coasts and islands of the Pacific ocean. Certainly, no mere human event of equal dignity and importance has ever occurred upon the earth. It will be followed by the equalization of the condition of society and the restoration of the unity of the human family. (6)

Remarkably, even within the context of a U.S. Senate increasingly rent by sectionalist division, Seward represents the opening of the Pacific to global commerce as inaugurating a new kind of supranational, world community. Like the discourse of
Manifest Destiny, whose ideological principles continue to drive prevailing paradigms for the contemporary study of American Imperialism, Seward’s rhetoric draws on an account of world history tracing the movement of civilization from East to West.  

Critically, however, Seward states that the settler colonialism of Manifest Destiny, which, in his account, entails the “discovery” and “organization” of the North American continent, is “but conditional, preliminary, and ancillary” to what he terms “the more sublime result” of the so-called “restoration of the unity of the human family” signaled by America’s arrival as a Pacific nation. By this rhetorical stratagem, Seward subordinates Manifest Destiny to a globalist vision, making a grand gesture beyond what John L. O’Sullivan termed “the great nation of futurity” (426). Yet this vision, as I will demonstrate, was generated in the fundamental interest of U.S. commercial and geopolitical power. If the Pacific would come to represent the center of a new globalized community, the United States would be the hegemonic power to foster its creation and ensure its prosperous development. At the base of Seward’s claims, therefore, was an overseas imperial impulse. As Secretary of State under Andrew Johnson, he would seek, unsuccessfully but portentously, “a lawful and peaceful annexation of the [Hawaiian] islands to the United States” (qtd. in Wilson 80). In 1887, white American plantocrats had delivered the infamous “Bayonet Constitution” to Queen Lili’uokalani and by 1898, the United States had positioned itself to seize the hegemonic role of which Seward had dreamed at midcentury.

Seward’s speech before Congress illustrates the defining feature of a covert imperial discourse I call Pacific Imminence. With a play on the double meaning of

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2 For more on this idea, see Reginald Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny (1981).
“pacific,” Pacific Imminence names a ruse of American exceptionalism that framed U.S. Pacific ascendancy as an impending development inaugurating global economic prosperity and a harmonious community of humankind. By emphasizing the continental imaginary of Manifest Destiny, most Americanist scholarship has viewed the Pacific as a peripheral site of empire-building in the long nineteenth century (1789-1914). While variously defined, Manifest Destiny remains rooted in a continental imaginary (“from sea to shining sea”) that centralizes the United States in the world. By contrast, I argue that the Pacific uniquely catalyzed a globalist re-branding of U.S. imperialism, depending on a rhetorical sleight that entails the nation’s ostensible de-centering. While it emerges around the same time as Manifest Destiny, I propose that Pacific Imminence constitutes a distinct and more resilient cultural formation.

My formulation of Pacific Imminence develops landmark work of pioneering Pacific studies projects by Rob Wilson, John Eperjesi, and Paul Lyons, while departing from their work in key ways. Each of these scholars has formulated paradigms for understanding the production of “the Pacific” as a coherent region in American culture.

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3 In his path-breaking work, Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier (1999), David Palumbo-Liu asserts that the “defining mythos of America, its ‘manifest destiny,’ was, after all, to form a bridge westward from the Old World, not just to the western coast of the North American continent, but from there to the trans-Pacific regions of Asia” (2). In my reading, however, the U.S.’s secondary movement “to the trans-Pacific regions of Asia” necessitated a new imperial paradigm. Even if the final horizon of Manifest Destiny was Pacific hegemony, I contend, its ideological premises remained tethered to the territorial imaginary of a bi-coastal nation. It was fundamentally rooted in a nationalist concept of American exceptionalism which suited an era of continental expansion and national consolidation. The innovation of Pacific Imminence was to de-center American exceptionalism for an oncoming age of accelerating globalization. While propagated by U.S. writers in the service of U.S. interests, the vision of Pacific imminence is fundamentally supranational, cosmopolitan. This modulation, I contend, provided U.S. imperialism with a lexis better suited to globalization and one that has proved more resilient than that of Manifest Destiny.

4 Here I would turn again to the Obama administration’s “Pivot to Asia” strategy. The rhetoric of Clinton’s Foreign Policy article “America’s Pacific Century” (October 2011), referenced in my opening, was revisited in a speech she gave in Honolulu in November 2011. Before an audience that included students from Thailand, the Solomon Islands, and China, Clinton drew upon the discourse of Pacific Imminence, emphasizing “a need for a more dynamic and durable transpacific system . . . that will promote security, prosperity, and universal values, [and] resolve differences among nations” (n. pag.).
Wilson is the first of these scholars to reference an “American Pacific,” which he defines as “a distinct area of historical formation” encompassing “the entire Pacific conceived as a region” with origins “during the imperialist struggle for Samoa and Hawai‘i, that is, between 1873 and 1900” (68). Eperjesi posits something similar with his notion of an “imperialist imaginary,” defined as “a particular representation, or misrepresentation, of geographical space . . . that projected the vast, dispersed area of Asia and the Pacific as a unified region” (2). While both Wilson and Eperjesi include Asia in their voluminous conceptions of the Pacific, Paul Lyons insists on a firmer distinction between the Asia-Pacific and the South Pacific space of Oceania. In his account of “American Pacificism,” a form of knowledge-production analogous to Edward Said’s famous notion of Orientalism, Lyons works to “reorient[t] . . . the scholarship that is written by U.S. non-Islanders toward a more Island-centered perspective and counter-memory” (4).

Similarly to Wilson and Eperjesi, I consider Pacific Imminence as an expedient tool for geographically containing and (mis)representing the Pacific for the purposes of U.S. imperial interests. In accordance with Lyons, I also aim to shift attention to a more “island-centered” perspective. Where my analysis of Pacific Imminence significantly diverges from these existing formulations, which also describe American epistemologies of and discourses about a reified “Pacific,” is in my emphasis on cosmopolitanism, which, as a pacifying construct, was utilized in Pacific Imminence discourse to mask histories of racializing violence with a cohesive geography of world harmony. I also diverge from the work of these scholars by embracing the emergent, comparative lens of the transpacific (discussed at greater length in the next section) and by placing heavier emphasis on the Philippine archipelago—a key postcolonial site that is largely absent
from their work—whose significance to U.S. cultural imaginings of the Pacific is rarely discussed in pre-1898 contexts.

To articulate how literary fiction responded to the advent of Pacific Imminence in the 1840s and its maturation in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, I draw on David Scott’s notion of the “problem-space,” a heuristic device he describes as “an ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs” (4). The problem space mutually inhabited by imperialist purveyors of Pacific Imminence discourse and the writers who contested its grand narrative, I contend, was defined by questions about how transpacific exchanges would impact community formation and consolidation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If Pacific Imminence proffered a unitary vision of cosmopolitan harmony and globalized capitalism in answer to such questions, North American writers of fiction tended to resist this discourse’s rhetorical smoothing of persistent colonial antagonisms, narrativizing resistant, though not always liberatory, visions of other imminent communities they either witnessed or imagined as coming into being in and around the Pacific Ocean.

Although the sectionalist crisis and the problem of slavery would come to dominate U.S. politics by the mid-nineteenth century, it is essential to note that the Pacific played an important role as a site of communal speculation both before and after the Civil War. Even as the persistence of the Union became an open question, antebellum writers such as Cooper, for whom cosmopolitan piracy served as a useful antithesis to republican cohesion, and Melville, who, in Moby-Dick (1851), chastened his own cosmopolitan yearnings by representing “Lascars and Manilla-men” as racial threats
beyond the pale of humankind, found in the Pacific a still largely uncharted space in which to probe the possibilities and limits of coming communities. When, after the Civil War, Pacific Imminence regained steam during the Progressive Era, west-coast poet Robert Louis Burgess penned “The Pan-Pacific Idea” (1920), a rhapsodic essay in the *Overland Monthly* that celebrated the exploits of “Captain Cooks” and “Commodore Perrys” while linking “foreign trade development” to an oncoming future in which “each race and nation may first learn to understand and then to love all the other races and nations on earth” (440). By contrast, biracial Asian-American author Sui Sin Far ironizes the homophonous name “Pan,” a word evocative of universalism, through a pair of 1912 short stories—“‘Its Wavering Image’” and “‘Pat and Pan’”—that both feature a Chinese-American woman or girl who reacts to the aggression of white supremacy by rejecting cosmopolitanism in favor of a singular attachment to Chinese identity.

While American writers sought to depict the possible futures of community, the colonized peoples of the Philippines—famously implicated, in Kipling’s infelicitous phrase, as “lesser breeds without the law”—had been developing their own prospective literary imaginings prior to the U.S.’s arrival in 1898. To accentuate this inter-imperial resistance, my study interrupts its examination of U.S. writers with a discussion of the fiction of José Rizal, an Hispanophone Filipino writer and national icon whose legacy vis-à-vis colonialism remains ambiguous and whose symbolic value has been claimed by a variety of opposed political positions. After 1898, the U.S. colonial regime worked hard to propagate an image of Rizal as a pro-American figure. One of his earliest biographies, written by American Professor Austin L. Craig, was entitled *Lineage, Life, and Labors of José Rizal, Philippine Patriot: A Study of the Growth of Free Ideas in the Trans-Pacific*
American Territory (1914). In the space of this title alone, one can see how the life and works of a Filipino anti-colonialist were cleverly appropriated by a U.S. regime dedicated to portraying its imperial intervention as “the Growth of Free Ideas.” At the same time, its invocation of “the Trans-Pacific American Territory” reinforces the exigence of the transpacific, as a contemporary critical paradigm, for analyzing U.S. cultural imperialism during this era. Such remodeling of Rizal for consumption by young Filipino students (the work is dedicated “To the Philippine Youth”) and for American readers, as well, also underscores the urgency of bringing Rizal’s anti-colonial fiction within the purview of American literary studies. To undertake this work, I would add, is to pursue a comparative methodology that honors the “trans,” or operative prefix, of transpacific studies, a field whose principal vectors I will address in the next section.

American Studies and the Transpacific

The intermittent temporalities and shifting geographies of my study’s critical program draw coherence from the theoretical optic of the transpacific, an emergent paradigm, and the contextual possibilities of newly accessible and expansive Pacific archives (to be discussed further in the next section). Since the early 1990s, the transatlantic has represented a fruitful concept for scholars in American Studies. By contrast, the critical potential of a corresponding transpacific paradigm has only recently begun to emerge. Two recently-published anthologies, Janet Hoskins and Viet Thanh

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5 As Joseph Rezek observed in a 2014 review article for American Literary History, “the first decade of the [twentieth] century witnessed an explosion of interest in this paradigm, reflected in the flourishing of numerous scholarly journals, imprints at academic presses, and tenure-track job listings” (791). I date the emergence of transatlantic studies to the publication of Paul Gilroy’s path-breaking study The Black Atlantic (1993). Since that time, Rezek adds, the transatlantic has developed from a “trend” into “an institution” (791).
Nguyen’s *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field* (2014) and Yuan Shu and Donald Pease’s *American Studies as Transnational Practice: Turning Toward the Transpacific* (2015) signal this rising critical interest. Like the transatlantic, the idea of the transpacific emphasizes flows of ideas, people, and capital through Pacific spaces, rather than fixed sites or locales. Such an emphasis on movement may be contrasted to an older concept, that of the “Pacific Rim,” a more static formulation that also tends to stress the large nation-states (China, Australia, the United States, Mexico, etc.) that circumscribe the Pacific’s myriad, but less representationally (and hence politically) empowered, archipelagic communities.

To date, there are still a limited number of studies that explicitly frame themselves as transpacific. Nevertheless, several milestone works in Asian American Studies have effectively conducted research in this fledgling field since the late 1990s. For literary

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6 This has begun to change since the beginning of the 2010s, with a number of new studies using “transpacific” in their titles. See, for examples, Andrea Geiger, *Subverting Exclusion: Transpacific Encounters with Race, Caste, and Borders, 1885-1928* (2011); John Price, *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific* (2011); Julia María Schiavone Camacho, *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960* (2012); Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in 20th-century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa* (2013); Adam Lifshey, *Subversions of the American Century: Filipino Literature in Spanish and the Transpacific Transformation of the United States* (2015); Jayson Gonzales Sae-Saue, *Southwest Asia: the Transpacific Geographies of Chicana/o Literature* (2016); and Richard Jean So, *Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Cultural Network* (2016). As many of the subtitles to these works attest, the most commonly addressed transpacific cultural exchanges are between large Asian-Pacific nations—usually China—and the United States. They also tend to focus on the twentieth century, with many emphasizing the middle of that century.

7 In *Immigrant Acts* (1996), for example, Lisa Lowe illustrates how Asians were incorporated into the United States economically but never culturally. Of continuing value to transpacific studies is her insight into the way Asians are conceptualized as being at once “‘within the U.S. nation-state, its workplaces, and its markets’ and ‘yet linguistically, culturally, and racially marked . . . as ‘foreign,’ and ‘outside,’ the national polity’” (8). Such awareness remains crucial to understanding how discourses of transpacific commercial partnership and ideas of global community attaching to them continue to bear the traces of such distinctions. In *America’s Asia* (2005), Colleen Lye’s analysis of American naturalism as a literary form reliant on Asian exceptionality reveals how key historical notions about Asians such as the “yellow peril” and “model minority” myth manifest “two aspects of the same, long-running . . . trope of economic efficiency” that scholars of the transpacific will recognize as operative up to the present day (5). Finally, despite contesting his reading of Manifest Destiny in an earlier note, I would be remiss to neglect the contributions of Palumbo-Liu to the emerging transpacific studies. Among these is the critical argument that “the real contact between and interpenetrations of Asia and America, in and across the Pacific Ocean”
scholars, other important precursors are found in the tradition of postcolonial scholarship developed since 1993 with the appearances of Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* and Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease’s edited collection *The Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993). In this vein, books such as Kaplan’s *Anarchy of Empire* (2002) and John Carlos Rowe’s *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism* (2000) established a base from which to understand U.S. culture as continuously formed in relation to its internal and external colonial ventures.

Working with the transpacific as a new paradigm allows American Studies scholars to develop this understanding further, while, at the same time, shifting emphasis away from the U.S. as the overriding object of concern. As Tina Y. Chen explains, one of the major aspirations of transpacific studies is “to bridge the distinctions between area studies and American studies models by focusing on the movements of people, resources, materials, and ideas across oceanic space” (890). It is within this vast, “oceanic space” that my study self-consciously dwells. Throughout, I direct my attention to American fictions that ruminate questions of future community in and through Pacific spaces. At the same time, my interest in Rizal’s literary work reflects a critical desire to move beyond an analysis of how American literature overwrites indigenous assertions of Pacific community and to begin discovering how those assertions—in this case, literary

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8 Rowe, himself, has recently observed the value of such a project. “I also am convinced,” he writes, “We must continue to study the still operative legacies of imperialism and neocolonialism in the Pacific. Unlike the Atlantic, which at least since Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993) has been reinterpreted in terms of several counternarratives to the dominant North Atlantic narrative, the Pacific has remained relatively under theorized in terms of the imperial narrative” (“Transpacific Studies and the Cultures of U.S. Imperialism” 136).
ones—function and continue to problematize expressions of U.S. cultural hegemony within and around the Philippines, its former colony. In broad terms, then, my project asks the question, how can we reconceive American and Asian literature of the long nineteenth century by considering their intersecting roles in the creation of a transpacific culture?

To date, most work on transpacific literature has concerned the twentieth century. This is not surprising, given that the United States involved itself in numerous political conflicts throughout the Pacific in this period. Nevertheless, the roots of those interventionist years are to be found in the nineteenth century, when the Pacific was beginning to become a tangible object of U.S. imperial knowledge. As Yunte Huang observes, the Pacific “has always been conceived by the colonizers both literally and abstractly—literally as objects for territorial expansion and abstractly as typological fulfillment” (4). Like Huang’s *Transpacific Imaginations: History, Literature, Counterpoetics* (2008), my study also offers a window into the nineteenth-century rise of an American transpacific imaginary. Unlike Huang’s work, however, which stresses the way the Pacific works as an “abstract space” whose conceptualization remains fundamentally elusive, my work analyzes literary meditations on community in relation to a distinctive discourse of Pacific imminence, traceable in U.S. legislative discourse and print culture, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (5). More specifically, it illustrates how this discourse frames global commercial integration, recurrently and insistently, as the basis for an emergent cosmopolitanism that was, in turn, resisted or otherwise remodeled by North American and Asian writers who formulated opposing visions of community in relation to this grand, unitary narrative. Moreover, while Huang
attends to a variety of forms, ranging from novels to autobiography and the poetic tibishi at Angel Island (graffiti poems by quarantined immigrants from East Asia), my study is principally concerned with narrative fiction. As I will explain further in the penultimate section of this chapter, this methodological choice stems from the unique capacity of fiction to narrativize a polyphonic aesthetics of the social that lends itself to speculations on community.

As I have already suggested, I also emphasize the Philippines, with specific attention to this archipelago and its associated peoples as they appear in the United States’ early transpacific imaginary.9 The Philippines is the largest Pacific nation in which the U.S. established an overseas colonial regime involving the direct government of a subject people. From an American Studies perspective, the archipelago’s importance as a transpacific relay point stems from this unique situation. Adam Lifshey has even gone so far as to argue that “Filipinos are the first moderns” since “they were the first people to experience and respond to American occupation on the other side of the world” (2). Regardless of whether one accepts this bold claim, Lifshey is certainly accurate in his assessment that, in the U.S. today, “introductory courses on Asian cultures and histories, whether at the high school or college level, routinely emphasize China and Japan and, during war reviews, Korea and Vietnam. The Philippines [by contrast] usually disappears off the scholastic map despite having set its very contours” (8). Hence, while my study tracks literary mediations of a capacious transpacific discourse, it also seeks to focalize

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9 An important study from which my work takes inspiration, in this regard, is Allan Punzalan Isaac’s American Tropics (2006), which, without explicitly framing itself as a study of the transpacific, makes an important contribution to this field with its the eponymous concept of “American tropics,” which Isaac defines “as a set of regulatory tropes and narratives that reveal a particularly U.S. American imperial grammar that create ethnic, racial, and colonial subjects” (xxv). A study of comparative racialization that links the insular territories gained by the United States in 1898 (including Cuba and Puerto Rico), Isaac foregrounds the Philippines in a manner that I have sought to develop in the following chapters.
the role of the Philippines as an underrepresented (yet remarkably populous) Pacific community. To do so, I argue, is to attend substantially to at least one important subject in what, inevitably, will constitute only a partial analysis of wide-ranging cultural trends.

A Transpacific Case Study: Reading the Rizal

Attending to the transpacific represents one opportunity for American Studies scholars to generate a multilateral critical response to the ongoing event of globalization. In their editorial introduction to Globalizing American Studies (2010), Brian T. Edwards and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar frame the field’s present challenge as one of moving beyond the orbit of American exceptionalism and adopting a more comparative approach in the selection and analysis of our objects of study (2). They also suggest that the realization of a more authentically “multilateral imaginary” in our field entails the embrace of an archive “vast and disfigured—disfigured both by its vastness and by a metonymic dispersal that resists unifying metaphorization, and even allegorization” (6, 27).

The major comparative feature of my own approach entails American fictions of Pacific imminence in dialogue with those of José Rizal, a writer whose late nineteenth-century novels are both resolutely anti-colonial and densely layered, “polyphonic” representations of Manila society (San Juan, Jr. n. pag. “Rizal and America”). The relevance of Rizal, who was executed by the Spanish before the arrival of the U.S. colonial regime, to a literary study so concerned with U.S. imperialism may not be

10 In Transpacific Studies, scholars such as Huang, Sae-Saue, and So have conducted important comparative work of this kind. However, to date, much of it has focused on Chinese literature in the twentieth century.
immediately apparent. Yet the political capital bound up in the figure of Rizal—a man of polymathic talents and seemingly limitless energy—has been continuously claimed by a variety of groups in the wake of his death, not least by the U.S. colonial regime itself. In 1903, for example, Theodore Roosevelt gave a speech in Fargo, North Dakota, proclaiming that “in the Philippine Islands the American Government has tried, and is trying, to carry out exactly what the greatest genius and most revered patriot ever known in the Philippines, José Rizal, steadfastly advocated” (qtd. in Craig 19). As historian Paul Kramer observes, however, “the U.S. colonial Rizal was one that Rizal himself might have had difficulty recognizing. Gone was the Rizal who had raged against the abuse of his countrymen by callous colonial officialdom, who had threatened revolution as the tragic necessity of the exploited, who had mocked Americans as blindly arrogant” (334-35).

The dissonance between these conflicting versions of José Rizal’s relationship to the United States has been observed before, but I would argue that such recognition does not communicate the transpacific import of Rizal as a literary-cultural figure. To frame my overall study in relation to this contested legacy, I would like to suggest a new chronotope drawn from online archives. While conducting research on Rizal, I chanced upon a volume of a periodical called Our Navy, which began publication in 1897. Instead

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11 Adam Lifshy has noted that “the moment the United States gained overseas colonies, it gained overseas colonial writers” (2). The “colonial writers” to which Lifshy refers are Hispanophone authors such as Pedro Paterno and Mariano de la Rosa, who were active during the U.S. colonial regime during roughly the first half of the twentieth century. His premise, simply put, is that “all Filipinos were considered by the United States to be American nationals. And literature by American nationals is American literature . . . It is not exclusively American, of course, but it is American regardless” (12). I agree with Lifshy’s here, but would include Rizal—who was never an American national—among this group of writers because his life and literary production were harnessed to perform specific kinds of cultural work in support of the U.S. colonial regime.
of finding a reference to Rizal and his work, I realized that I had stumbled on a series of articles, mostly published during 1919, about Filipino sailors serving in the U.S. Navy, most notably aboard a battleship christened the U.S.S. Rizal.

The self-described “Standard Publication of the United States Navy,” Our Navy constitutes both a periodical forum and an institutional archive. Reflecting the overt racism of the Progressive Era, it nevertheless registers key conversations about the composition and structure of the U.S. naval community. Its early coverage of the U.S.S. Rizal—which was mostly crewed by Filipinos—illustrates this tendency in a context of comparative racialization. Shortly after its commissioning, letters appear in Our Navy advocating for the instatement of similarly racialized “black ships” (“Black Ships” 22). Such letters, which present themselves as progressive texts, nevertheless reflect deeply segregationist worldviews. Whether for Filipinos or black Americans, each correspondent prescribes a separate-but-equal response to the question of minority promotion.

Consolidating this position in October 1920, an editor wrote, “Our Navy would be in favor of Filipinos if they are in all respects professionally qualified, being promoted rate for rate to the highest enlisted rating, on ships manned entirely by Filipinos” (“Filipino Ships” 27). Statements such as this one reflect the United States’ vexed relationship to the Philippines—the colony it desired for geopolitical reasons, but whose people it continuously distanced through racist legislation.

In other issues, Our Navy exploits the heavily accented, broken English of Filipino sailors as a source of comedy. For example, a September 1920 issue reprints an earnest letter from a Filipino mess attendant at Mare Island appealing to his commanding officer to resolve a pay dispute. The item appears under the title “Wallace Irvin Had
Nothing on this Little Brown Brother.” Irvin’s *Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy* (1907) is a yellow-face memoir written from the perspective of a 35-year-old Japanese “boy,” while the similarly infantilizing phrase “Little Brown Brother” repeats a common epithet for Filipinos after the end of the Philippine-American War (1899-1902). Framed in these terms, lines such as “it is respectively requested that I beg your pardon in looking out this business on my part Sir” reveal the double-bind of the colonial subject, whose flawed mimicry is both demanded and denigrated by the colonizer (28).

Despite this institutional prejudice, letters from Filipino sailors in *Our Navy* provide some sense of their practices of resistance and professional aspirations. In a January 1921 issue, one sailor complains to the editor about an officer named “Mr. Reveille” who insulted him and others by referring to their language as “Monkey talk.” The letter then riffs on the notion of racial primitivity, a central trope of colonial discourse (“A Letter from a Filipino Boy” 28). “He [Mr. Reveille] was crazy,” it explains, “Because he thought that those people were a group of Monkeys, but instead he was [a monkey] because his mind was a Monkey’s thought” (28). While haltingly expressed, such lines intimate the *ressentiment* of Filipino sailors whose white officers and counterparts frequently treated them as inhuman beings. In other letters, sailors cite the Rizal’s success to advocate for promotion opportunities and exhibit longsighted attention to future concerns—subverting, in the process, stereotypes about their race’s essential impulsivity. In a March 1920 issue, one contends that promotions will allow him and his compatriots to be “of greater value to the Island”; another complains that too many in “the American public . . . believe the Filipinos are all wild men” [and] bolo
swinging head hunters”; while a third appeals to America’s founding principles of “right, justice and equality for all” (“Filipinos Want Chance at All Ratings” 34).

In the absence of a large body of literature produced by Filipinos in the early American colonial period (particularly among the working classes), such letters can be read—adapting terms from Arjun Appadurai—as comprising an important “migrant” or “diasporic archive” (22). Insofar as these texts strive toward more equitable futures, they imaginatively sketch a “map” or “guide to the uncertainties of identity-building under adverse conditions” (23). While frustrated in their attempts to integrate in the U.S. naval community, Filipino sailors nevertheless found ways of making themselves heard while negotiating alternative modes of belonging (some gained respect—and, more importantly, personal fulfillment—as skilled boxers, for example). Although Appadurai considers the rise of such archives a recent development, often locating them in cyberspace, I suggest that they may, at times, be discovered embedded in older, official forums such as Our Navy. Engaging with these types of archives may enable us to reconceive the limits of larger institutional archives in which they are nested. Demonstrating a telling ambivalence, one Filipino wrote proudly that he had “been reading Our Navy consistently for the past three years” and praised its “willingness to aid the Navy man in every just and proper way” before holding the Navy accountable for Filipino language deficiencies and advocating for grammar lessons aboard the Rizal (“U.S.S. Rizal’s Filipinos Want School” 32). In such cases, Filipino letter-writers performatively asserted a stake in the possessive “Our” of the magazine’s title.

What does all this mean with respect to José Rizal’s legacy as a transpacific figure, as a writer of anticolonial fictions with relevance to analyses of U.S. imperialism?
As I read it, the archival resonances afforded by *Our Navy* allow us to better grasp how Rizal becomes—literally and figuratively—a vessel of U.S. imperialism and, thereby, to better (and more urgently) attend to how his anticolonial fictions of community form part of a *longue durée* of transpacific imminence in the nineteenth century. To put it differently: while we know, from Kramer and others, that Rizal’s legacy was contested in the aftermath of his death (and indeed throughout the U.S. colonial period), a fresh engagement with these archival materials allows us to conceptualize the stakes of that contestation by means of a suggestive chronotope. A singular vessel, the *Rizal* speaks volumes about U.S. imperialism and its exportation of the limits of community since the nineteenth century. It calls together the warped legacy of a Filipino political icon, the rise of U.S. military hegemony, the unequal dynamics of cultural assimilation, and the suspended identities of a subjugated people caught between the mirage of emancipatory principles and the lived reality of imperial practices.

**Literary Fictions of the Transpacific: Migrating Forms, Aesthetics, and Community**

While my study highlights the trope of Pacific imminence first emerging in the late 1840s, it primarily attends to how American and Asian writers reproduced and resisted its triumphalist logic. Critically, these writers’ competing visions of community entailed reconfigurations of established western literary forms that adapt to transpacific geopolitical developments even as they provide the very means with which to conceptualize them. As a literary scholar, my principal aim is to map this process of mutual constitution, whereby social forms such as the classical republic, the cosmopolis, the colony, and the postcolonial nation-state merge with literary forms such as the utopia,
the gothic, the national romance, and regionalist writing. My understanding of how social and literary forms constitute congruous patterns of order derives from the new formalism articulated by Caroline Levine and Jacques Rancière’s theories about the relationship between politics and aesthetics.

In *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015), Levine proposes “a new formalist method” rooted in the idea that since “it is the work of form to make order . . . this means that forms are the stuff of politics” (16). She argues that historicist trends in literary studies, which tend to associate form with institutional power, have led scholars to become expertly attuned to “fissures and interstices, vagueness and indeterminacy, boundary-crossing and dissolution” (21). Neither Levine nor I dispute the fact that this attention has produced invaluable work in Literary and Cultural Studies over the last few decades. Indeed, the field of Transpacific Studies is built on the recognition and appreciation of such liminal, ambivalent, and motional phenomena. Nevertheless, the ordering strategies of form remain important considerations for this field-in-formation. In dealing with the Pacific, one continuously comes up against notions of the ocean’s vastness and sublime volume—notions, in other words, of its unfathomability. Still, writers have been conceptualizing the Pacific—the ocean, its islands, and the littoral territories thought to “surround” it—as a discreet entity, recurrently, for over two hundred years. In doing so, they have harnessed the structuring resources of form to contain,

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12 As Levine puts it, elsewhere, “This work has been compelling and politically important, without any doubt, and it will surely continue to be productive to analyze formal failures, incompletion, and indefinability. But while it may be possible to rid ourselves of particular unjust totalities or binaries, it is impossible to imagine a society altogether free of organizing principles. And too strong an emphasis on forms’ dissolution has prevented us from attending to the complex ways that power operates in a world dense with functioning forms” (21).
circumscribe, and make sense of its apparent boundlessness. At the same time, their work vivifies social forms, that is, potential ways of being in Pacific spaces.

What makes Levine’s work useful for my purposes is her convincing argument that by drawing hard and fast distinctions between social forms and literary or aesthetic ones, we foreclose productive avenues of thinking deriving from an awareness of these forms’ continuous interpenetration. Additionally, she observes the unique power of narrative—a literary form that originates in older social forms such as folktales and epic poems—to bring different formal levels into juxtaposition. It is this unique feature of narrative that motivates my decision to deal primarily with literary fiction in this study. Narratives, in Levine’s terms, “best captur[e] the experience of colliding forms” because they “can set in motion multiple social forms and track them as they cooperate, come into conflict, and overlap, without positing an ultimate cause” (31). In the texts I examine, North American and Asian writers present visions of Pacific community that mobilize such multivalent contestations.

Nevertheless, as useful as I find Levine’s work to be, I maintain reservations about one of her conceptual distinctions. Like her, I use the word “form” to name recognizable structures of order operative in both social and aesthetic contexts. Throughout “Imminent Communities,” I find this term to be more useful than the related concept of “genre.” Unlike Levine, however, I am not convinced that form and genre can be considered as completely distinguishable constructs. For Levine, “any attempt to

13 Definitions of genre developed since the early 1980s inform the perspective described here. Fredric Jameson notes the communicative function of genre, while also underlining its specificity to a distinct historical context. “Genres are essentially literary institutions,” he explains, “Or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact” (106). The historical-temporal features of genre have taken on special interest in more recent decades. As Amy Kaplan notes, “an outworn genre can be refurbished to represent a new political context” (Anarchy 94). Lloyd Pratt states that, “as genres take shape over the course of one or several centuries, they
recognize a work’s genre is a historically specific and interpretive act,” while forms are “more stable than genre, [their] configurations and arrangements organiz[ing] materials in distinct and iterable ways no matter their context or audience” (25). In her estimation, it is precisely these “different ways” of travers[ing] time and space” that make them distinguishable: genre is historical, while form is trans-historical. This seems to me an overly neat distinction, however, since forms—aesthetic or social—never arise in an historical vacuum. If genres are historically produced, I would argue that literary forms necessarily bear the traces of the generic contexts in which they first emerged.\footnote{I derive this argument from at least two sources. The first is Raymond Williams’s classic formulation of residual, dominant, and emergent elements (see Marxism and Literature, 121-27). If forms emerge through genre, they resemble genres insofar as they retain residual traces of their initial historical situations. The second is Fredric Jameson’s pithy characterization of genre as comprising the “sedimentation of various generic discourses” (147).}

As such, I do not distinguish between form and genre based on temporality. Rather, I use the term “form” because it is a more versatile unit of analysis for addressing the intermittent and partial deployment of certain social or aesthetic patterns. Most of the works I analyze in this study are liminal texts, multiform works that do not belong wholly to a single genre. In Chapter 2, for instance, I analyze Herman Melville’s reconfiguration of gothic form in Moby-Dick, a novel that few would consider to be an example of “the gothic novel.” What I continue to find useful in Levine’s analysis of forms revolves around two of their key features: portability and the concept of their latent affordances. Portability, quite simply, refers to the way forms can be redeployed across space and time. The notion of “affordance,” drawn from design theory, describes “the potential uses cannibalize and adapt previous genres. Along the way they accrete a range of different and competing temporalities” (8). “The anachronistic formal precedents that inhere in any genre,” he continues, “Guarantee that this literature also functions as an archive of temporalities drawn from moments other than its own—temporalities that it returns to the present (15). Articulating a capacious concept of genre that anticipates Levine’s theory of forms, Lauren Berlant observes, “Genres provide an affective expectation of the experience of watching something unfold, whether that thing is in life or in art” (6).
or actions latent in materials and designs” (Levine 18-19). If the notion of portability highlights the fact that forms are often generalizable, the idea of formal affordances refers to the enduring specificity that renders them both recognizable and constrains the scope of their secondary application. Throughout “Imminent Communities,” my readings track the development of literary forms as they adapt to the contours of new Pacific contexts. Concurrently, I consider how affordances, which might be considered formal predispositions, passively condition the way literary forms process these new contexts.

The stakes of this literary processing, I contend, are high. They amount to political acts, moreover, since they contribute to social structures deemed natural, reveal their artificiality, or work to dismantle them. Levine’s methodological intervention suits my interest in such practices, as it draws extensively on preexisting analyses of the interrelation between politics and aesthetics. One of her acknowledge precursors is Jacques Rancière, whose work continues to provide useful concepts for addressing what he calls, in one influential book, *The Politics of Aesthetics*. Throughout this dissertation, I consider how literary narratives articulate, question, or disarticulate aesthetic arrangements resembling something Rancière calls “the distribution of the sensible.” As a “system of self-evident facts of sense perception,” the distribution of the sensible “reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed” (12). By placing sense-perception at the heart of community-making, Rancière’s concept centralizes aesthetic practice as a core activity of the political.

He derives this theory from an analysis of the work of Friedrich Schiller and Immanuel Kant, for whom “aesthetic contemplation assumed a communal form—the
sensus communis—that provided opportunities for collective agency” (Funchion 17). Based on this presupposition, Ranjana Khanna observes, “The tenor and vehicle of judgment has to shuttle back and forth between self and community so that it can seal the relationship between the two and confirm the existence of each in the process” (120). Recognizing this process, it follows, enables us to once again reconsider the relationship between aesthetic and social forms. Rather than analyzing how these forms interact, we may begin from the premise that a communitarian logic operates in the act of aesthetic judgment itself.

What most interests me about Rancière’s theory, then, is its triangulation of aesthetics, community, and the constitutive role of a dispossessed social group in communitarian politics. Throughout “Imminent Communities,” I address this dynamic interrelationship. “Although common aesthetic experience can facilitate new bonds of social cohesion,” John Funchion observes, “It does so through a logic of exclusion” (17). In terms of Rancière’s concept of the distribution of the sensible, this logic comes to “defin[e] how subjects are classified into individual types and ultimately aggregated into a larger population” (17). The process through which this occurs, in the transpacific fictions I examine, most often takes the form of racialization. In their path-breaking study

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15 For Kant, in particular, the act of aesthetic judgment is contingent upon the idea of subjective universality. When one considers an object beautiful, Kant maintains, “he will speak of the beautiful as if beauty were a property of the object and the judgment logical” (97). However, aesthetic appreciation does not occur at the level of cognition for Kant—beauty is not a feature of the object to be apprehended through reason. “It is only aesthetic,” he argues, “and contains merely a relation of the representation of the object to the subject, because it still has the similarity with logical judgment that its validity for everyone can be presupposed” (Critique of the Power of Judgment 97). In order to make an aesthetic judgment (which concern the relation of subject to an object) he subsequently reasons that any such claim “must be combined with a claim to subjective universality” (97). This subjective universality, he later clarifies, entails “the assent of all” and “is not supposed to be grounded in any concept of the thing, because it is a judgment of taste” (161). The telos of such reasoning, I argue, is a colonized world in which western aesthetics have become universal (i.e. a world in which we may already be living).
Racial Formation in the United States, Michael Omi and Howard Winant note that the “constitutive element” of racialization is a “process of selection, of imparting social and symbolic meaning to perceived phenotypical differences” (111).\(^{16}\) The word “process” is key, here, as it refers to the concept’s usefulness for addressing dynamic, historical changes. As Daniel HoSang and Oneka LaBennett observe, “In contrast to static understandings of race as a universal category of analysis, racialization names a process that produces race within particular social and political conjunctures” (212). In most, if not all cases, figures excluded from the various literary communities I examine have histories of racialization that exhibit continuities even as they change. In Chapter 2, most notably, I address the genealogy of the treacherous Malay figure in western culture before illustrating how Melville specifically reworks this figure in Moby-Dick.

Chapter Summaries

In my first chapter, “A Healthful Industry”: Cooper, Utopian History, and the Antebellum Pacific Imaginary,” I analyze James Fenimore Cooper’s The Crater (1847) as a transitional text illustrating the aporias of Manifest Destiny at a moment when the Pacific was being re-introduced to American readers through works such as Dana’s Two Years Before the Mast (1840), Charles Wilkes’s Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition (1845), and Melville’s Typee (1846). Hybridizing the genres of utopia and conjectural history, the novel critiques U.S. domestic politics while mobilizing a Pacific imaginary that tacitly sanctions imperial interests abroad.

\(^{16}\) Although, as David Theo Goldberg notes, racialization normally refers to applications of racial significance “at specific sociostructural sites to relationships previously thought to lack them,” nothing about this concept prohibits a reference to secondary or tertiary ascriptions (“Racism” in Encyclopedia of American Studies, n. pag.).
In Chapter Two, “‘Five Dusky Phantoms’: Gothic Form and Cosmopolitan Shipwreck in Melville’s *Moby-Dick,*” I highlight representations of “Lascars” and “Manilla-men” in Herman Melville’s antebellum fiction. Focusing on *Moby-Dick* (1851), I argue that the novel’s cosmopolitan propositions (which echo the logic of Pacific Imminence) recoil at the “phantom futures” these Malay-coded figures forebode. Melville’s representation of Ahab’s boat crew, comprising Fedallah and four Manilla-men, as inhuman threats restructures the gothic as a future-facing mode and prompts a reassessment of contemporary discussions of biopolitics. An article version of this chapter was recently published with the title “‘Five Dusky Phantoms’: Gothic Form and Cosmopolitan Shipwreck in Melville’s *Moby-Dick*” in the Spring 2017 issue of *Studies in American Fiction.*

Chapter Three, “Recasting Filibusterism(o): National Romance, Corruptive Cosmopolitanism, and American Intrigue in the Novels of José Rizal,” begins by illustrating how the American colonial regime appropriated Rizal by emphasizing his cosmopolitan activities in Europe and downplaying, or avoiding completely, the critique of cosmopolitanism he undertakes in his two novels: *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891). While, as a well-traveled, polyglot scientist and writer, Rizal does cut a cosmopolitan figure in the sense of personal cultivation, his fiction underscores the perils of cosmopolitan comparativity. Like Sun Yat-sen, his Chinese contemporary, Rizal conceives of cosmopolitanism as a salutary *proposition* for all humankind, but a misguided—and even baleful—*practice* for colonized peoples seeking to form a national community.  

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17 I borrow this language of “proposition” and “practice” from Sheldon Pollock. See “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History” (2000), 593.
dynamite novel, Rizal narrates how cosmopolitan alienation produces extreme forms of violence that, through melodramatic excess, index the divide between the communitarian needs of an incipient Philippine people and a revolutionary consciousness spawned abroad. To accent the inappropriate appropriation of Rizal by U.S. imperial interests, I conclude the chapter by analyzing the history of American filibusterism as an overlooked, ironic context—suggested by the novel’s title—that reveals Rizal’s subtle and proleptic vision of U.S. intervention in transpacific foreign affairs.

In the fourth and final chapter, “Disputing the Pan-Pacific: Sui Sin Far’s Transpacific Regionalism and the Figure of the Eurasian,” I analyze issues of *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, the Honolulu-based literary organ of the seldom-studied Pan-Pacific Movement. Analyzing the work of editor Alexander Hume Ford and other contributors, such as Jack London, I illustrate how *Mid-Pacific Magazine* advanced an imperialist form of cosmopolitanism that distills the message of Pacific Imminence for the Progressive Era. It does so, I contend, by charting an imaginary transpacific network that centralized a hyperreal vision of Hawai‘i as a “microcosmopolitan” synecdoche of Pan-Pacific community. Against imperial cartographies of this kind, self-described Eurasian writer Sui Sin Far articulates a complex intertextual form of transpacific regionalism organized in relation to an alternative, mixed-race vision of cosmopolitan futurity. As I demonstrate, this entails the construction of a counter-hegemonic literary network that unmoors the work of institutional figures such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Robert Louis Stevenson from their use by white supremacist pedagogies of U.S. empire.
CHAPTER 1:

“A Healthful Industry”: Cooper, Utopian History, and the Antebellum Pacific Imaginary

Everything human is abused; and it would seem that the only period of tolerable condition is the transition state, when the new force is gathering to a head, and before the storm has time to break.

—James Fenimore Cooper

Like a peaceful island in the midst of a roaring ocean, the just city finds itself surrounded, even besieged, by a world essentially foreign to it. More precisely still, it establishes itself through such an account of the outside world. . . . The possibility and subsistence of the just city, where ‘men live in peace . . . With one another’, . . . rests on the injustice of harming the alien.

—Claudia Barrachi

In The Black Atlantic (1993), Paul Gilroy established a transnational paradigm whose influence remains central to scholarship on the Atlantic World. Decentering the nation-state as a primary unit of analysis, Gilroy famously shifts to an “image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean as a central organizing symbol” (4). Considering the attention that the Atlantic World has received, in the wake of Gilroy’s path-breaking work (and indeed even before his book appeared), it is curious that far less attention has been paid to the idea of a corresponding Pacific World.18 The likeliest reasons for this disparity stem from the relative size of the two oceans—the Pacific, at 63 million square miles, is much larger than the Atlantic, at 41 million square miles—and the fact that the Pacific, in contrast to the Atlantic, has only been considered as a singular entity since the end of the eighteenth century. Historian

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18 An MLA International Database search for the terms “transatlantic” or “trans-atlantic” yields 1,590 results, whereas a search for “transpacific” or “trans-pacific” yields only 94. This yields an approximate ratio of 16:1.
Jean Heffer points to the year 1784—when the American merchant vessel *Empress of China* set sail from New York for Canton—as the moment from which one can begin to conceive of the Pacific as a singular geographic concept. “While the ‘Atlantic world’ already had a long history behind it,” he explained, “One looked in vain for the first indications that there would one day be a ‘Pacific world.’ But this was precisely what was about to change [from 1784 onwards], most notably with the coming of Americans, attracted by the magnet of China” (19).

Heffer makes two key points here. Firstly, his reference to 1784, although significant for several reasons (it comes on the heels of James Cook’s final voyage), centrally associates the emergence of a Pacific world with the event of U.S. independence (the Treaty of Paris, which formally ended the Revolutionary War, was signed on January 14th of that year). Second, Heffer’s reference to the “magnet of China” is critical to the conception of the Pacific—in reality a superregional space—as a distinct terraqueous concept I will examine in this chapter and those to follow. While the size of the Pacific often leads to its segmentation into component areas—i.e. the South Pacific, Asia-Pacific, or North Pacific regions—the beginnings of maritime trade in the Pacific, which was dominated by Americans in the early nineteenth century, brought these areas into continuous (if not always peaceable) relation. Because Americans struggled to find goods of value to Chinese traders in their own territories, they began to collect sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer* (sea cucumber) from South Pacific islands, along with sea lion furs and beaver pelts from North Pacific areas, to sell in Chinese markets (Dulles 3). With these developments a new trade network, comparable (though not analogous) to that described by Gilroy’s ships crossing the Atlantic, begins to emerge.
In *The Black Atlantic*, the idea of the ship functions as a chronotope—referring to Bakhtin’s concept of a literary object wherein “spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole” (84). For Gilroy, ships “focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs,” tracing a spatial-temporal network structured by socio-historical practices. With the Pacific, it is possible to devise a similarly nautical network, though equal attention must be paid to the archipelagic distribution of territories throughout this vast oceanic space. As Richard Lansdown notes, such a notion originates with “a European fixation projected onto the Pacific” (10). “Again and again,” he explains, “The island has figured in the European mind as a place where human potential would emerge unhampered by the conventional life, where a passage over the sea would . . . allow a new experiment in living . . . [and where] the strange and unfamiliar . . . would and could be confronted” (11).

In the present chapter, I suggest that an incipient idea of the Pacific reveals itself as a palimpsest of generic traces (in and through the forms of utopian narrative and conjectural history) and emergent imperial geographies. These, in turn, are linked to a *longue durée* of western exploratory discourse beginning with Antonio Pigafetta’s account of the Magellan voyage and culminating, for present purposes, in the United States Exploring Expedition (1838-42). At the same time, as part of my larger argument in “Imminent Communities,” I will illustrate that this understanding of the Pacific prompted a new conception of the nation’s imperialist drive, which, in contrast to the dominant imaginary of Manifest Destiny, represented an emergent, yet distinguishable
paradigm as early as the 1850s. To underscore the key tensions endemic to this shift (geographic, temporal, and racial), I analyze James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Crater* (1847). As the work of an author most famous for romances of the nation’s continental frontier, *The Crater* provides a useful lens through which to understand how the United States’ imperial encounter with the Pacific outstripped the settler colonialist logic of Manifest Destiny. In what follows, I will discuss some of the reasons why *The Crater* proves to be a novel at odds with itself in order illustrate—in my three subsequent chapters—how Pacific imminence, as a forward-looking, globalist rebranding of American imperialism emerging just after *The Crater*’s appearance, produced a new imperial logic that was contested by both North American and Asian writers.

The narrative concerns Mark Woolston, a young Pennsylvanian in the late eighteenth century, who goes to sea to make his fortune. The ship on which he departs, bound for Canton, wrecks on a reef in the South Pacific, where he and his friend Bob Betts are stranded. What follows is a lengthy tale of Pacific utopia found and lost, interspersed with moments of essayistic social commentary reflecting issues of the late Jacksonian era. In this chapter, I articulate the vexed, yet politically revealing relationship between these textual elements, which Cooper scholars have traditionally treated in isolation. Torn between expansionist and conservative tendencies, I contend, Cooper paradoxically envisions the Pacific as both an imminent frontier and a remote utopian realm uniquely conducive to social conjecture. In this regard, the author’s Pacific fantasy articulates a point of convergence between classical republican and liberal discourses: the site at which the quest for social regeneration meets a need to pursue ever-expanding commercial interests. The mechanics of this fantasy entails an informed, if selective,
intervention in U.S. Pacific discourse, the strategic deployment of racial antagonism as a bulwark against social corruption, and the futurological reprogramming of utopian and historical literary forms.

By the time of The Crater’s publication, Cooper had already established a reputation as a cantankerous social critic. Although 1828’s Notions of the Americans mostly championed democratic principles over and above the aristocratic traditions of Europe, the author’s perspective grew increasingly conservative in the following decades. By 1847, his rising penchant for pedagogical interventions drew the ire of at least one anonymous literary critic. In “Cooper’s Last Novel,” an essay published in the United States Magazine, and Democratic Review, The Crater is characterized as a pedantic vehicle for Cooper’s elitist vision of society. While observing the author’s persistent talent as a writer of sea stories, the piece nonetheless excoriates him as a “monarchist,” accusing him of holding “the ‘people’ […] in most sovereign contempt” (438). Given the magazine’s populist celebration of Jacksonian principles and its optimistic account of Manifest Destiny, this aversion is unsurprising.¹⁹

While the charge of “monarchis[m]” misses the mark, Cooper’s work often displays a “valorization of a culture politically democratic and socially aristocratic” (Pudaloff 712). This idea of culture owes much to classical republicanism, a political philosophy rooted in Plato, developed by Machiavelli, and adapted further by English Whigs in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.²⁰ As Philip Gould observes,

¹⁹ Politically, The Democratic Review is well-known for its expansionist agenda, which began with the editorship of John L. O’Sullivan. For more on the magazine’s history, see Frank Luther Mott’s A History of American Magazines, vol. 1 (1938) and Robert J. Scholnick’s “Extermination and Democracy: O’Sullivan, the Democratic Review, and Empire, 1837-1840” (2005).
²⁰ Cooper clearly displays his republicanism late in the novel. After Mark has left the colony, the narrator relates the following. “[Mark] had learned the great and all-important political truth, that the more a people attempt to extend their power directly [the word “directly” appears in larger font than the rest] over state
classical republicanism “theorized that political life depended largely upon a citizenry’s capacity for ‘virtue’” and “embraced a view of society and politics that was corporate, consensual, and hierarchical” (24). This theory rises to the fore in *The Crater*. The novel’s central problem might be termed what J.G.A. Pocock terms a “Machiavellian Moment.” Such a moment represents the “conceptualized time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude, as attempting to remain morally and politically stable in a stream of irrational events” (Pocock viii). In contrast to an emerging liberal faith in social progress expounded in the pages of magazines like the *Democratic Review*, classical republicanism holds that the “corruption” of society cannot be avoided, though it may be forestalled under the right conditions (Pocock xviii). In *The Crater*, Cooper fantasizes a Pacific utopia in which these conditions might, at least for a time, be met.

As published in its original 1847 edition, *The Crater* comprises two distinct halves, divided into two volumes. The first half concerns Woolston’s voyage to the South Pacific and goes on to narrate his time as a (mostly) solitary castaway. The second half, however, describes the rise and fall of a colony, initially comprising the families of Woolston and Betts but eventually growing to include hundreds of other American settlers. Against a backdrop of war with Pacific Islanders and East Asian pirates, this
colony thrives for a considerable period, engaging in lucrative whaling activities and trading sandalwood at Canton. When the wars end, however, the once harmonious community succumbs to divisive forces of factionalism and litigiousness. Woolston, the founder of the colony and paragon of republican virtue, is deposed by the manipulations of a late-coming newspaper editor, a lawyer, and several religious ministers. Contrived to elicit readerly disgust, this victimization of virtue by populist forces represents a major preoccupation of the work.

When he wrote *The Crater*, Cooper was nearing the end of his life (he would die in 1851). A series of libel lawsuits—sometimes described as his “war with the press”—had rendered him extremely hostile to the effects of newspapers, which exerted immense influence on American politics in the Jacksonian period, as well as other figures and institutions he deemed guilty of demagoguery.21 Deeply informed by this hostility, *The Crater* undertakes several attacks on demagogues while narrativizing a number of ideas set forth in *The American Democrat* (1838). In this treatise, Cooper speaks directly to the problem of the “public,” understood as a false idol of populism. “It is a great mistake,” he argues, “For the American citizen to take sides with the public, in doubtful cases affecting the rights of individuals, as this is the precise form in which oppression is the most likely to exhibit itself in a popular government” (56-57). As the natural counterpart of the demagogue, the notion of a “public” represents a central source of concern and antipathy for Cooper in his late period.

21 See, for example, “The Lake-Gun.” His final published work, it directly concerns the maleficent influences of demagogues. The phrase “War with the Press” is used by Robert E. Spiller in his introduction to this work (17). For more on the influence of newspapers, see Jeffrey L. Pasley’s “The Tyranny of Printers”: *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (2001).
Responding to this overt political content, most twentieth-century scholarship consistently emphasizes *The Crater’s* demagogue themes over and above its South Pacific engagements.\(^2\) Recently, however, a few critics have begun to revisit this latter aspect of the text. In an astute article on *The Crater’s* relationship to Hawai‘i, Adam Lewis argues that “while Cooper’s Pacific romance has often been read in relation to the author’s opinions about U.S. national politics or continental expansionism” the book’s setting represents “a context often overlooked or obscured by focusing exclusively on empire building in the North American continent or the larger American hemisphere” (208).\(^2\) While this statement is essentially accurate, reassessments of *The Crater’s* Pacific narrative generally reverse the trend of earlier scholarship without addressing the crucial interrelation of the work’s twin engagements.

In the following pages, I argue that *The Crater* presents an imperial vista of a U.S. controlled Pacific that emerges from the clash between Cooper’s overt desire to condemn political developments in the United States and a historicizing response to increased public fascination with the Pacific as a space of romantic fantasy and geopolitical opportunity. It is only by grasping the formal relation between these two critical elements that the work’s literary intervention can be fully articulated. By centralizing this dialectic, I attend to the ways in which Cooper’s text represents the Pacific as a new blank frontier.

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\(^2\) Warren S. Walker, succinctly indicates this mid-twentieth-century trend in *James Fenimore Cooper: An Introduction and Interpretation* (1962). He writes, “A story that, on the surface, appears to be a South Sea idyl, [*The Crater*] is actually a political and social allegory in which Cooper recapitulates the whole history of the United States” (100). Studies of the novel include John C. McCloskey’s “Cooper’s Political Views in ‘The Crater’” (1955), Donald Ringe’s “Cooper’s *The Crater* and the Moral Basis of Society” (1959), and John P. McWilliams, Jr.’s “*The Crater* and the Constitution” (1971). Earlier studies of the novel mainly take the form of notes regarding Cooper’s source material. See, for examples, Harold H. Scudder’s “Cooper’s *The Crater*” (1947) and a pair of articles by W. B. Gates: “Cooper’s *The Crater* and Two Explorers” (1951) and “A Defense of the Ending of Cooper’s *The Crater*” (1955).

\(^2\) Another critic to address the work’s Pacific intervention is Paul Lyons, who devotes a brief section to *The Crater* in *American Pacificism* (2006).
in which the nation’s misdirected social energies may be re-harnessed in the productive work of colonial development. I examine this representation at three levels: the historical, the theoretical, and the formal. In the first section, I examine how Cooper selectively suspends discussion of South Sea cannibalism—the most persistent trope in writing about the Pacific in this time—and approaches Pacific discourse through the problem of authority in a populist age. Specifically, I illustrate how Cooper conspicuously mutes the most well-known Pacific romance of his moment—Melville’s controversial *Typee* (1846)—and creatively re-deploys the figure of Naval Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, the embattled leader of the United States Exploring Expedition (1838-42) and author of its official *Narrative* (1844). In the next section, I demonstrate how Cooper’s anomalous account of race—an exogenous notion of difference that re-routes social antagonism away from the endogenous notion of class—plays a key role in his account of republican regeneration. In the final section, I analyze the text’s generic fusion of utopian travelogue and conjectural history to demonstrate how Cooper utilizes paradoxical manipulations of space and time to work around moral and juridical objections to territorial expansion.

**Melville, Wilkes, and U.S. Pacific Discourse in 1847**

Cooper makes a complex intervention into the Pacific discourse of his time. On the one hand, his production of a Pacific romance in 1847 represents a timely business decision. The Pacific whaling industry, which emerged in 1815 and “reached its peak between 1839 and 1857,” generated substantial coverage in commercial papers, while several new works of literature, including Richard Henry Dana’s *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840) and James Jackson Jarves’s *History of the Hawaiian, or Sandwich Islands*
(1843), had sparked new interest in the Pacific (Heffer 47). However, by the time The Crater was published, the most popular and controversial work on the Pacific was undoubtedly Melville’s Typee (1846). In the words of one contemporary reviewer, this Peep at Polynesian Life “threw an unexpected halo of romance over the theretofore unattractive islands of the Pacific” (“Notices of New Books” 91).

Blurring the lines between fiction and fact, Typee participates in a long tradition of Pacific travel narratives (dating to the voyages of Magellan and Cook) while, at the same time, reframing the South Pacific and its peoples through the lens of romance. Central to Typee’s allure and controversy is its dual engagement with the specter of cannibalism and the civilizing work of missionaries. What made Melville’s work so controversial was that it appeared to offer sympathy for the former, while sharply criticizing the latter. Melville’s actual positions on these issues are not so easily summarized, but in comparison to another major work of Pacific literature from the period—namely, Charles Wilkes’s Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition (1844)—they distinguish themselves for their statements of cultural relativism.

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24 Dana’s father (also named Richard Henry Dana) sent a letter to Cooper—dated September 23rd, 1840—in which he enclosed a copy of Two Years Before the Mast. Jarves’s book was noted for communicating the economic value of Hawai’i to the United States. In a March 31st, 1843 review of Jarves’s History, the New-Bedford Mercury highlighted the “real importance of these islands to American commerce, and the relative ratio to that of other nations” (“The Sandwich Islands” 4). Meanwhile, the New Hampshire Sentinel (June 21st, 1843) called Jarves’s work “exceedingly interesting” for its statistical revelations about Hawai’i’s “importance to American commerce, and their intimate relations with the United States” (“History of the Hawaiian, or Sandwich Islands” 2). Other early works on the Pacific include David Porter’s Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean (1822) and Edmund Fanning’s Voyages to the South Seas, Indian and Pacific Oceans (1838).

25 In a review of Omoo (May 27th, 1847) The National Era observed, “The Pacific Ocean, especially, is the scene of the wildest adventures, and no one will deny this who will listen to the tales of Herman Melville” (2).

26 Critics have recognized Wilkes’s Narrative as an important influence on literary production in the antebellum period, though most often in relation to the work of Poe and Melville. However, as W. B. Gates notes, “For The Crater [. . .] Cooper drew most of the material dealing with the islands of the Pacific” from this narrative, along with The Voyages of Captain James Cook (243). He adds that, in some cases, Cooper “either lift[s] items almost bodily or employ[s] a descriptive passage as the basis of a plot incident” (243). While Gates and others have pointed out these direct links between Cooper’s and Wilkes’s
Wilkes’s narrative documents the first concerted effort of the U.S. government to acquire first-hand hydrographic, naturalistic, and anthropological information about the Pacific Ocean and its diverse territories. Among other things, the five-volume *Narrative* places the imprimatur of state knowledge on prevailing notions of bloodthirsty, inhuman cannibals and selfless, industrious missionaries. At the same time, however, the work’s commercial publication with Wiley & Putnam, along with Wilkes’s filing of a copyright, suggests an intention to exploit a literary market for information on the Pacific Ocean and the people who dwelled there.

Juxtaposing *Typee* and the *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* allows us to better understand the nature of *The Crater’s* intervention in 1847. While it is clear that Cooper presents an image of the Pacific reflecting the broader political concerns of his late career, his crafting of this image nonetheless responds to a literary-historical moment shaped by these touchstone works. While *The Crater* certainly lacks the sensationalism of *Typee*, it nonetheless trades in a form of Pacific romance popularized by Melville in that text. The sober, scientific tone of Wilkes’s *Narrative* may also be glimpsed at regular intervals throughout Cooper’s novel. However, as I will suggest in the following, *The Crater’s* timely vision of the Pacific has less to do with the form of the *Narrative* per se, than with the events of its publication as imperial reconnaissance and the public response to Wilkes’s court martial in 1842.27 Coupled with

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27 It is true that by 1847 Cooper’s popularity was in considerable decline. Even so, his status as one of the first professional American authors—built on the strength of works such as *The Spy*, *The Pilot*, and the Leatherstocking Tales—lent him a degree of uncommon literary prestige. With *The Crater*, Cooper throws the weight of this remaining clout behind a Wilkesian account of the Pacific. This endorsement, I argue, begins with personal affinity but draws much of its political energy from the circumstances of Wilkes’s court martial.
the knowledge of Cooper’s personal regard for the Wilkes family, an understanding of
the circumstances of Wilkes’s court martial and the way Cooper might have conceived it
is critical to an appreciation of *The Crater*, since it is impossible to do justice to this
work’s vexed vision of the South Pacific without taking seriously the author’s obsession
with demagoguery and its special capacity to pervert power in a republic.

Like Cooper, Charles Wilkes came from a prominent New York family. The two
men knew each other and their correspondence suggests a high degree of mutual
respect. In August of 1844, Cooper was attending to the publication of his novel *Afloat
and Ashore* (1844) at the Philadelphia office of publishers Isaac Lea & William
Blanchard. In a letter to his wife, he writes that “Charles Wilkes is in this house,
superintending the publication of his work [*The Narrative of the United States Exploring
Expedition*]. It will be a very magnificent book,” he continues, “and I make no doubt will
do him credit” (*Correspondence* 525-26). The character of these remarks, alongside the
coincidence of a shared publisher, suggest that Cooper and Wilkes may have conversed
on the subject of Wilkes’s experiences in the Pacific. As importantly, Cooper goes on to
mention a “Mrs. Henry,” Charles Wilkes’s widowed sister, whose son—Wilkes Henry—
served as a midshipman on the Expedition and was killed by Fijian islanders at Malolo in
1840. Cooper tells Susan that “Mrs. Henry has a second son in the Navy, though she felt
the loss of Wilkes very deeply” (526). The reference to the young Wilkes by his first
name exhibits a social familiarity between the Cooper and Wilkes families.

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28 It is critical to note that James Fenimore Cooper had another friend named Charles Wilkes, described by
Cooper’s grandson (also named James Fenimore) as a “prominent New York business man; highly
cultivated, as appears in his letters, and interested in politics, art, and literature” (*Correspondence* 147).
On the other side, there is strong evidence suggesting Charles Wilkes’s familiarity with and respect for Cooper’s writing. Eliza Henry—the “Mrs. Henry” to whom Cooper’s letter alludes—was a regular correspondent of her brother Charles’s. Among Wilkes’s unpublished correspondence, an 1852 letter from Eliza to Charles comments on a recent event celebrating Cooper, who had recently died. Referring to recent newspaper articles “in which much is said in praise of your old friend Fenimore Cooper,” she tells her brother “I wish you had been among those who met to do him honor[,] you would have warmly advocated the proposition that a monument should be erected to one whose genius has certainly done so much to advance our claim as a literary nation” (Henry 2-3). Here, Eliza’s reference to Cooper as Wilkes’s “old friend” is especially revealing, intimating that the bond between the two men was certainly closer than that of mere acquaintances.

While the personal affinity between Cooper and Wilkes is important, the event of the latter’s court martial and public reprimand furnishes an intriguing scenario of chastened authority resonant with the demagogic injustices at the heart of The Crater. Beyond knowing and respecting Wilkes personally, Cooper had demonstrated, in the eight years prior to The Crater, a sustained dedication to honoring the U.S. Navy and its history.29 The year 1839 saw the publication of his History of the Navy of the United States of America, while 1846 brought the Lives of Distinguished American Naval Officers.30 Additional evidence of this concern for the Navy’s reputation may be gleaned

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29 Cooper had, himself, served as a midshipman in the Navy.
30 Mackenzie’s court martial, which would partly inspire the events of Melville’s Billy Budd, resulted from his summary execution of three sailors suspected of mutiny aboard the U.S.S. Somers on December 1st, 1842. One of those executed was midshipman Philip Spencer, son of Secretary of War John C. Spencer. The court martial, which took place in February and March of 1843, generated a great deal of controversy in the press. Cooper’s review, which first appeared in Graham’s Magazine, ultimately concludes that Mackenzie was not justified in his course of action. His argument, which is both tortuous and painstakingly
in Cooper’s “elaborate review” of the *Proceedings of the Naval Court Martial in the Case of Alexander Slidell Mackenzie* (1844). While the document does not defend Mackenzie, who stood accused of murder and was ultimately exonerated on all counts, it frames its tortuous examination of the court martial proceedings as providing a corrective critique to that of a polemical press, whose accounts “were exaggerated and false, sustaining Captain Mackenzie’s course in terms so extravagant as to betray the temper in which they were written, and to demonstrate that the object was to vindicate the act, rather than the justice of the country” (265). Cooper’s concern with the maleficent influence of the papers is, of course, a recurrent theme of his late works and an essential aspect of *The Crater*.

When Wilkes was court martialed following his return to the United States in 1842, he was not accused of murder. Unlike Mackenzie, however, he was sentenced to a public reprimand that damaged his reputation. Among other things, Wilkes was accused of mistreating junior officers, administering unduly severely lashings, and for disobeying orders that prohibited him from making attacks on indigenous peoples. Even though these allegations seemed justified by the testimony of others involved in the Expedition, some commentators lamented the public response to the proceedings. As one writer for the *Alexandria Gazette* wrote, “public opinion seems to be strangely against him [Wilkes] . . . his official conduct seems, to use as mild a term as possible, to have been characterized by unnecessary unkindness. We speak what we hear as public opinion” (2). Here the writer’s use of the word “strangely” intones a note of criticism that speaks to a broader

*moderate (“we have taken a view of this affair that will probably give satisfaction to those who hold extreme opinions on neither side”), holds that the commander’s fixation on “one side of a question [i.e. a conspiracy among the crew], suddenly took the direction of magnifying this mutiny” (338 and 343).*
animosity towards “the public” among some sectors of U.S. society. Meanwhile, the *Army and Navy Chronicle, and Scientific Repository* wrote that although it “desire[d] to keep clear of politics . . . the Executive officers of the Government at Washington ought to consider themselves in the light of grand-jurors, bound to examine into the character of the charges preferred against an officer, and the nature of the evidence; and not to order a court in order merely to gratify the resentment of the accuser, although there may be but little apparent cause for a formal investigation” (qtd. in “U.S. Exploring Expedition” 499). Such a sentiment is reminiscent of Cooper’s rhetoric throughout the 1840s; its skepticism towards the “resentment of the accuser” intimating a sense of injustice in the public sphere.

In the end, the Navy did not discipline Wilkes severely. A letter from the Secretary of the Navy, reprinted in the newspapers, addressed Wilkes in the following way: “Sir: you have been duly tried by a Court Martial, found guilty of illegally punishing, or causing to be punished, men in the squadron under your command, and sentenced to be publicly reprimanded by the Secretary of the Navy” (“Sentence of Lieutenant Wilkes” 2).31 The letter, signed by Naval Secretary A.P. Upshur, ends by saying “the country which honored you with a command far about the just claims of your rank in the navy, had a right to expect that you would, at least, pay a scrupulous respect to her laws” (2). For present purposes, the incident of Wilkes’s public reprimand should be considered within the context of Cooper’s grievance against newspapers. While some observers of the Wilkes case considered his punishment to be trivial, Cooper’s historical sensitivity to the issue of libel frames the commander’s public shaming as a grounds for

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31 Notably, this sentence says nothing about the charges of disobeying orders and attacking natives, charges which I will examine in the next section.
deep offense. In *The Crater*, the industry of protagonist Mark Woolston forms the heart of a utopian celebration of republican virtue. Indeed, Cooper frames his disenfranchisement as the colony’s legally-guaranteed governor for life as a kind of martyrdom. Therefore, knowing something about Wilkes’s perceived character and the way in which Cooper’s work reimagines a similar scenario of beleaguered or misunderstood virtue is important to grasping the way in which the novel brings together Pacific history and Cooper’s immediate political concerns.

In an 1845 review of Wilkes’s *Narrative* in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, the author comments on the character of the Expedition’s commander and speculates about the general cause of “resentment” among his crew. Deferring to the testimony of officers stationed in Brazil (where the Expedition called during its voyage around Cape Horn), they observe that “Captain Wilkes exhibited great energy and untiring industry and perseverance. These, in fact, appear the prominent points of his character. They are good qualities in themselves; and indeed, nothing of importance can be done without them, but they belong rather to the body than the head” (“United States Exploring Expedition” 305). It goes on to criticize Wilkes for his officiousness and micro-managing of the Expedition. It nonetheless admits that the section of the *Narrative* dealing with the ascent of Mauna Loa in Hawaii “shows Capt. Wilkes in his best colors, and exhibits the indomitable energy and perseverance and noble physique of the man in the most favorable light” (305). The concept of “industry” is a central one to *The Crater*. As Philip Gould explains in his analysis of metaphorical Puritanism in historical romances of the

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32 As the *Wisconsin Democrat* of 18 October 1842 reports, “The result of the tedious Court Martial at New York, is a reprimand to Col. Wilkes. Col. Wilkes, you are a naughty boy! How severe” (“Items of All Kinds” 2).
Early Republican era, “Early nationals . . . refashioned the meaning of ‘virtue’ in new, complex, and often inconsistent ways” (8). He goes on to say that this period’s discourse of virtue “included a related lexicon of ‘industry,’ ‘vigor,’ and ‘valor,’ as well as ‘benevolence,’ ‘affection,’ and ‘refinement’” (8). In The Crater, Mark Woolston’s character can be read as reconfiguring the “untiring industry and perseverance” of Wilkes in a fictional context wherein such qualities produce only salutary effects on the community (“United States Exploring Expedition” 305). Hence, in Cooper’s classical republican view societal corruption is intimately linked to a communal forsaking of the virtuous individual.

Rather than to examine the textual similarities between Wilkes’s Narrative and The Crater, which scholars such as Gates have already demonstrated, my purpose in this section has been to elucidate circumstances surrounding the figure of Charles Wilkes that register a lost subtext to the Narrative’s imperial archive.\(^3\) Besides being a chronology of U.S. imperial reconnaissance, Wilkes’s text should be considered the work of an embattled authority. From the 1840s through the end of his life, Cooper was prepared to discover the maleficent influences of the demagogue at every turn. Taking stock of Cooper’s favored themes in The Crater—the rights and capabilities of the individual, the importance of hard work for sustaining republican virtue, and the need for social hierarchy to prevail over egalitarianism, the importance of the Wilkes court martial as an historical touchstone becomes clear. At a moment just prior to The Crater’s publication, this event entails the public censure of an industrious individual by his community and demonstrates tension between two models of government with which Cooper constantly

\(^3\) See footnote 7.
wrestles: aristocracy—emblemated by a stern hierarchy and rule of an officer-class at 
sea—and democracy—to which the language of the Secretary of War’s sentence, 
delivered once the Expedition returned home, directly refers. In the next section, I will 
begin to assess Cooper’s temporary solution to this tension: namely, the regenerative 
labor of racialized warfare.

**Race, War, and Republican Regeneration**

As Geoffrey Sanborn’s work demonstrates, cannibalism represents one of the 
defining features of writing about the South Pacific in the nineteenth century. However, 
not one reference to this practice appears in *The Crater*, an elision that has yet to be 
emphasized by critics. From one perspective, this absence may reflect Cooper’s attempt 
to distance his work from Melville’s. More importantly however, Cooper’s suspension 
of cannibalism—a subject that makes recurrent appearances in Wilkes’s *Narrative*— 
reveals a crucial point about his representation of racialized others in *The Crater*. 
Specifically, the work conceptualizes racial difference as a function of the demands of 
republican regeneration, rather than as an essential property marking certain forms of life 
as exceptional. In other words, Cooper does not use race as an instrument of

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35 One particularly notable, and grisly, account of cannibalism from the early 1840s appears in *The Boston Recorder* of September 14th, 1843. It tells of the crews of “two or three Australian ships which put in at the War, Fizowee, and Caledonia Reef Islands,” who were “barbarously murdered” and, in one instance, “tied to trees, with their legs and arms extended—their entrails were taken out and roasted, and their bodies then roasted and devoured” (147). Such imagery is totally absent from *The Crater*.
36 While it is unclear if Cooper ever read *Typee*, he is likely to have been familiar with it, given his nautical interests and association with the publisher G. P. Putnam. *The Crater* was originally published by another New York house, Burgess & Stringer. In 1826, Charles Wiley published *The Spy*, which launched Cooper’s career. His son, John Wiley, entered a partnership with G. P. Putnam that lasted until 1848, when Putnam dissolved their association. Subsequently, G. P. Putnam and Sons published several works by Cooper, along with Susan Fenimore Cooper’s *Rural Hours* (1850).
37 It is surprising to find that the extant criticism on *The Crater* scarcely touches on the work’s representation of South Pacific islanders or transnational Asian pirates. Lyons provides an important
dehumanization, but rather as a tool for displacing faults that, by his own admission, are all too human.

During one of *The Crater*’s several wars, the colonists manage to capture the son of Waally, chief of the hostile Kannakas, who they use to negotiate for five imprisoned crewmembers of the *Rancocus*. What is unusual about this moment is Cooper’s acknowledgment of Waally’s love for his son. In other South Pacific narratives—including Wilkes’s—natives commonly appear as inhuman cannibals prepared to kill and eat their friends and family members. Representing his protagonist as an artful leader skilled in the reading of human nature, Cooper instead emphasizes Mark’s shrewdness in playing on Waally’s emotions. By contrast to the governor’s restraint and self-discipline, “[Waally] had not the art to conceal his strong affection for his son” (48; vol. 2).

Throughout, Cooper tends to construct his racialized figures as antagonists whose human excesses may be utilized as pretexts for eliciting social discipline and communal cohesion. As with the Kannakas, the pirates do not display any special bloodlust. They are instead animated by their own consuming greed for property. Upon first landing, they question one of the colonists, Bigelow, about “everything that bore directly on the wealth and movable possessions of the people” (167; vol. 2). Following this interrogation, “the houses and mills were visited and plundered . . . [and] a great deal of injury was inflicted

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exception here, making “kannakas” a central point of his discussion of the novel. However, his reading of the novel is very brief, coming as part of a larger assessment of “opening accounts of the South Seas” (48). He observes that “In *The Crater* the model society cannot exist apart from the existence of savages, whose subjection through wars strengthens the colony’s moral fiber and unity” (69). While this point is important to the way Cooper imagines racial antagonism in the novel, it does not position it in context of the classical republican model Cooper envisions. It also leaves out the importance of the pirates, whose negation of private property is a major concern.

38 Wilkes says as much regarding the natives of Fiji in the third volume of the *Narrative*, asserting that “the cannibal propensity is not limited to enemies or persons of a different tribe, but they will banquet on the flesh of their dearest friends, and it is even related, that in times of scarcity, families will make an exchange of children for this horrid purpose” (102; vol. 3).
on the settlement merely for the love of mischief” (168; vol. 2). However, “no attempt was made to injure Bigelow. On the contrary, he was scarcely watched” (169; vol. 2). Time and again, therefore, figures of racialized otherness in *The Crater* cannot be characterized as objects of terror. The threat they express does not originate with anything unique to themselves, but rather with universal human tendencies towards what the narrator terms “cupidity, selfishness, and envy” (205-06; vol. 2). By displacing these tendencies onto hostile Kannakas and East Asian pirates, the colony suspends a major source of republican degeneracy: class envy, or the envy of property.

Hence, one can only rightly appraise the work of racialization in *The Crater* by beginning with the issue of class. For Cooper, class is an inevitable fact of society and its roots lie in an unequal distribution of property. This is not to say, however, that he endorses anything like communism. In a screed against its impracticality, which closely resembles the essayistic prose of *The American Democrat*, the narrator of *The Crater* reveals Cooper’s belief that “civilization could not exist without property, or property without a direct personal interest in both its accumulation and its preservation” (70; vol. 2). Nevertheless, Cooper ultimately ascribes the downfall of the colony to “the envy of the majority” and false ideas about “aristocracy and privileged orders” (218; vol. 2). Such a narrative casts private property as both the prime guarantor of civil society and the seed of its eventual destruction.

The narrator defends Mark against the charges of promoting an “aristocracy and privileged orders” by insisting that the governor and his family are “citizens without one right more than the meanest man in the colony” (218; vol. 2). This despite the fact that a law, written before the vast majority of colonists arrive, installs Mark as “governor for
life” (224; vol. 1). In *The American Democrat*, the logic behind this seeming contradiction stems from a distinction between what Cooper calls “political rights,” comprising the prerogative to frame laws, and “civil rights,” which pertain to the administration of these laws (43). He condones an equality of the latter, but not the former. For Cooper, then, everyone should be equal *under* the law, but not everyone is equal to the task of deciding what the law says. Complaining of the folly of universal suffrage in New York, Cooper again attests to this belief, which typically amounts to saying that even in a republic the propertied class should rule.39

He distinguishes this view of social hierarchy from aristocracies of the ancien régime by formulating a Jeffersonian notion of “natural aristocracy” in the character of Mark Woolston.40 At the same time, he is at pains to discourage “that favourite sophism of the day which would teach the inexperienced to fancy it an advantage to a legislator to commence his career as low as possible on the scale of ignorance, in order that he might be what it is the fashion to term ‘a self-made man’” (163; vol. 1). Unable to rebuke heredity (he had, himself, inherited lands) yet unwilling to embrace the common man, Cooper produces an idiosyncratic account of class that is apparent from *The Crater’s* earliest pages. There the narrator tells us that Mark comes from a “plain family, and very unpretending in their external appearance, but of solid and highly respectable habits around the domestic hearth” (2; vol. 1). By depicting Mark as a sailor who attains wealth

39 Near the end of *The Crater*, he laments that “a majority of the electors of the state of New York are, at this moment, opposed to universal suffrage, especially as it is exercised in the town and village governments, but moral cowardice holds them in subjection” (210; vol. 2).
40 In a letter to John Adams dated October 18th, 1813, Jefferson writes, “I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. . . . The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society” (Cappon 388). Jefferson distinguishes the natural aristocracy from an “artificial aristocracy” based on “wealth and birth” (388). The emphasis Jefferson places on “virtue and talents” locates his conception of a natural aristocracy within the tradition of classical republicanism.
and power through his own personal initiative, Cooper seems to embrace pure meritocracy. Still, he never fails to underline and condone the persistence of class difference within the colony.

Marriages there accord with the principle that “like looks for like” and the narrator explains that although “there was no person or family at the Reef which could be said to belong to the highest social class of America . . . yet, distinctions existed which were maintained usefully, and without a thought of doing them away” (257; vol. 1). Insisting that such distinctions are natural, the narrator adds that “the notion that money alone makes those divisions into castes which are everywhere to be found, and which will probably continue to be found as long as society itself exists, is a very vulgar and fallacious notion” (257; vol. 1). In *The Crater*, the character of Bob Betts, Mark’s closest friend, anchors this premise.

Cooper imagines in Betts an ideal kind of lower-class person who gracefully accepts government by his social betters (206; vol. 2). A critical aspect of this fantasy revolves around his humility and rejection of power. Originally part of the colony’s directing “council of three,” which also comprises Mark and his brother-in-law Heaton, Betts resigns because he feels that he is not qualified to serve alongside gentlemen (224; vol. 1). The narrator renders his resignation from the council in the following terms:

. . . The honest fellow had resigned his seat in the council, feeling that he was out of his place in such a body, among men of more or less education, and of habits so much superior and more refined than his own. Mark did not oppose this step in his friend, but rather encouraged it; being
persuaded nothing was gained by forcing upon a man duties he was hardly fitted to discharge. (125; vol. 2)

In classical republican terms, Betts’s refusal of political power in the colony may be understood as a patrician fantasy of plebeian consent. By modeling such a fantasy, he highlights the injustice of Mark’s ultimate downfall. If only all men unfit to rule could be as selfless as Betts, so Cooper’s narrative implies, communal harmony would perpetuate itself. Yet there are always too many who succumb to the sophistry of demagogues and refuse to accept the rectitude of social hierarchy. To arrest this movement, Cooper utilizes racial difference as an instrument of displacement for turning internal antagonism outward.41

The apex of this achievement occurs in a symbolic scene when the body of Waally, the villainous Kannaka chief, winds up on the deck of one of the colony’s ships. After Mark fires “hot shot”—a heated cannonball—into one of the pirate vessels, the ship explodes sending off fragments that include a “human body, which was cast a great distance in the air, and [which] fell, like a heavy clod, across the gunwale of the sloop.

41 A curious parallel to this situation may again be found in the Wilkes Expedition. Although the principal allegations against Wilkes in his court martial concerned the mistreatment of his own crew, two charges were brought against him relating to violence towards Pacific Islanders during the Expedition. According to the accusations of Assistant Surgeon Dr. Guillon, the Expedition attacked natives at least five times: on the island of Clermont Tonnerre (August 1839), Venna Lebre (Fiji group, July 1840), Malolo (Fiji group, July 1840), Upolo (Navigator Islands, February 1841), and Drummond’s Island (Kingsmill Group, April 1841). Most of these attacks involved the burning of towns and destroying of fruit trees, however, at Malolo, where the Expedition retaliated against natives following the deaths of Lieutenant Underwood and Midshipman Wilkes Henry, Guillon observed that “not less than twenty” natives were killed (“Naval General Court Martial on board the North Carolina” 1). The charges concerning violence against native came under two headings: “cruelty” and “disobedience of orders” (1). According to this third charge, Wilkes had been “expressly forbid by his written orders from the Navy Department to use force or violence against uncivilized nations, of lands visited by him, except in cases of absolute self-defence” (1). In The Crater, the circumstances of the colonists’ war with Pacific islanders and transnational pirates are themselves framed in terms of “absolute self-defence.” In relation to this idea, Cooper concocts a narrative in which war with racial others is eminently justifiable insofar as these peoples cannot, in any technical sense, be considered indigenous to the territories in dispute.
This proved to be the body of Waally, one of the arms having been cut away by a shot, three hours before!” (194-95: vol. 2). This gruesome scene is particularly notable because *The Crater* pays remarkably scant attention to bodily detail throughout.\(^42\) Indeed, prior to this scene, Waally is never physically described. Given this context, this episode of aberrant violence advertises itself as a moment rife with metaphorical implication.

Cooper’s narrator stresses this invitation to interpret by noting how “the colonists ever afterwards considered” the spectacle “as a sort of Providential manifestation of the favour of Heaven” (195; vol. 2). Yet, as an account of the colony’s downfall follows shortly thereafter, it is better interpreted as a demonstration that the social body of a republic attains its highest degree of cohesion in the act of dismembering an external antagonist.

The narrator summarizes this turn of events in deeply ironic terms, saying “thus perished a constant and most wily enemy of the colony, and who had, more than once, brought it to the verge of destruction, by his cupidity and artifices” (195; vol. 2). These terms are ironic because Cooper uses much of the same vocabulary to describe the colony’s demise at the hands of internal forces. The “wiles of the demagogue,” the narrator proclaims, stir latent impulses of “cupidity, selfishness, and envy” among the community members and turn them against one another (205-06; vol. 2). Paradoxically, in *The Crater’s* republican imaginary, the so-called “verge of destruction” (something of a misnomer given the colony’s amazing lack of casualties in battle) may constitute a space in which communal integrity is at its most secure. Cooper certainly valorizes the liminal nature of such a space when he asserts, late in the text, that “the only period of tolerable condition [in a community] is the transition state, when the new force is

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\(^42\) Given that the description of native bodies represents a scopophilic trope of much travel literature, such inattention is highly unusual. For more on this practice, see Samuel Otter’s *Melville’s Anatomies.*
gathering to a head, and before the storm has time to break” (212; vol. 2). There is perhaps no greater transitional state for a society than that of territorial warfare, which substantially alters the conditions of state power, the economy, and many other aspects of everyday life. Both transitional and transformative, the practice of war represents for Cooper a key resource of republican regeneration.

Although the event of Waally’s death highlights this classical republican principle, Cooper articulates it throughout The Crater. Even before the pirate war, he intimates the significance of a racialized threat as a bulwark to degeneration. During an extended period of peace, the colonists start to believe that the Kannakas have lost interest in their territories. “So smoothly did the current of life flow,” during this time, “that there was probably more danger of [the] inhabitants falling into the common and fatal error of men in prosperity, than of anything else . . . their beginning to fancy that they deserved all the blessings that were conferred on them” (3; vol. 2). Hence, even early in the second volume (before the pirates arrive), the absence of an external antagonist already suggests the specter of social decline.

The “Pirate War” provides an opportunity for republican regeneration par excellence. When it ends, the narrator’s early concern with “the fatal error of men in prosperity” proves well founded: “A great change came over [the colonists’] feelings after the success of the ‘Pirate War,’ inducing them to take a more exalted view of themselves and their condition than had been their wont. The ancient humility seemed

43 It is worth mentioning that the opposite perspective was maintained by other groups. The Reverend Rufus Clarke, writing for the Advocate of Peace and Universal Brotherhood, observed that “the direct tendency of war is to transfer the power from the many to the few” (225). Though Clarke sought to decry war as distinctly “anti-republican,” Cooper frames it as a regenerative event (225). Ironically, the historical record goes against Cooper’s vision of war as healthful industry. As Andrew K. Frank notes, the Second Seminole War (1832-45) ended in a stalemate that cost the United States the lives of 1,500 soldiers and $40 million (404).
suddenly to disappear” (197; vol. 2). In the immediate wake of the war, prosperity seems at its highest ebb. However, it is actually in the time of war itself that the classical republic attains its peak level of social harmony. In her recent reading of Plato’s *Republic*, the ur-text of classical republicanism and itself a proto-utopian narrative, Claudia Baracchi observes, “War, or its impending possibility . . . seems to play a determining role in the emergence of the order and structure of the just city . . . the concern with war . . . far from being a derivative aspect of the [republic’s] founding effort, is one of its radical, that is, primary and fundamental elements” (163). It is only when antagonism becomes internal—or factional—that the problems start. Throughout much of *The Crater’s* second volume, Cooper displaces the corruptive forces as “cupidity, selfishness, and envy” (to revisit his specific formula) onto racialized others.

The colony’s earliest encounters with racialized outsiders involve neighboring Kannakas (Pacific Islanders), who are, in fact, separated into two groups. Friendly Kannakas—led by the tribal leader Oorony—comprise one group, while hostile Kannakas—led by the treacherous chief Waally—comprise the other. The conflict between Ooroony and Waally allows the colonists to play one faction against the other. Factionalism, of course, will bring about the colony’s eventual downfall. Such reversals occur repeatedly in Cooper’s South Pacific fantasy. Another of these reversals, which again testifies to a pattern of racial displacement, frames Waally and his faction as selfinterested parties who divest the colony of its own imperial ambitions. Apart from representing Ooroony’s “most formidable rival and bitter foe,” Waally’s presence on a

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44 As Lyons observes, Cooper uses the term “kannakas” (*kanaka*, or ‘person’ in Hawaiian), which by the mid-nineteenth century had become the general (and in time derogatory) term for all Oceanians in the maritime” (67).
flotilla of canoes approaching the colony inspires the following reflection by the narrator:

“Indeed, it seemed scarcely possible that men like the natives should hear of the existence of such a mountain as that of Rancocus Island, in their vicinity, and not wish to explore, if not possess it” (219; vol. 1). The passage suggests that such a disposition—“to explore, if not possess”—is a quality more applicable to “the natives” than to Mark and the white settlers.

After Waally’s initial defeat, Cooper foreshadows the colony’s eventual downfall by highlighting social dysfunction among the Kannakas. Preceding the arrival of the printer, the lawyer, and the sectarian minister among the colonists, Waally represents The Crater’s first demagogue. “As commonly happens everywhere,” the narrator relates, “The ascendancy [sic] of evil in this cluster of remote and savage islands was owing altogether to the activity and audacity of a few wicked men, rather than to the inclination of the mass” (51-52). To correct this trend, Mark strategizes to restore the deposed Oorony to power, anticipating a policy of regime change utilized by the United States in later years. What this demonstrates is that although Cooper depicts the scourge of demagoguery as a transcultural phenomenon, his efforts to present a narrative with universal implications still mediate a rising imperial disposition in American Pacific discourse. With the shrewdness of a seasoned diplomat, Mark is able to install Oorony through a “bloodless conquest” and force Waally to “acknowledg[e] his crimes, obtain[ ] a pardon, and pay[ ] tribute” (53; vol. 2).

So far I have argued that Cooper uses the fiction of racial alterity to displace and vivify patterns of antisocial behavior to which all humans are susceptible. As a category whose alleged fixity can be easily attached to overt variations in appearance, it serves an
instrumental function in *The Crater*. However, Cooper does not construct race as an entirely empty concept to be filled with displaced social energies, but rather retains the cultural associations of racial difference—particularly those connected to regions such as the Southern and Northern Pacific archipelagoes—with deficiencies of intellect and self-discipline.

When the pirates first arrive, it is their mixed racial composition that first betrays their purpose. Whereas Melville will imagine a form of cosmopolitan community aboard the *Pequod* in *Moby-Dick*, Cooper interprets heterogeneity as a sign of social disorder. Despite some ethnic variation, however, it turns out that the majority of the crew are of East Asian extraction. Bigelow notes that “Most of them came from the East Indies, the coasts, or the islands” (167; vol. 2). Even so, Cooper incorporates an element of racial hierarchy. “The officers were mostly Europeans by birth, or the descendants of Europeans,” the narrator adds, before observing that “two-thirds of the people whom he saw were persons of eastern extraction; some appeared to be Lascars, and others what sailors call Chinamen” (167; vol. 2). The peculiar villainy of Lascars and Manilla-men (who hail from the Philippines) is something Melville takes far more seriously than Cooper (see Chapter 2), yet the identification of the pirates as chiefly Asian reflects *The Crater’s* engagement with the Pacific maritime world.

The pirates’ East Asian origin provides Cooper with an opportunity to depict social incoherence in racialized terms. This is particularly the case with the inclusion of “Chinamen” among the crew. Earlier in the novel, during a second war with the Kannakas, one of the colony’s ships is captured when, during a night watch, “two of the people engaged at Canton—one of whom was a very good-for-nothing Chinaman . . .
drunk, and permitted a fleet of hostile canoes to get alongside in the dark” (77; vol. 2). In conjunction with Cooper’s emphasis on Kannaka superstition, such details evidence the importance of a racial foe who provides a significant yet always surmountable source of antagonism. This trope of racialized incompetence is heightened further when Bigelow dissembles regarding the true nature of Vulcan’s Peak, the most valuable territory of the colony. He “assume[s] an air of great mystery” and tells the pirates that the Peak is inaccessible to man (167: vol. 2). “To Bigelow’s surprise,” the narrator relates, “[this account] did not appear to awaken the distrust he had secretly apprehended it might” and that the pirates “appeared disposed to believe what he said” (167; vol. 2). This combination of treachery and guilelessness characterizes racialized antagonists throughout *The Crater*.

In the case of the Kannakas, they possess greater numbers than the colonists but are prey to primitive superstitions. An interesting irony emerges here, insofar as the savage Kannakas are portrayed as too wary of their gods while the colonists are ultimately represented as not fearing their God enough. Nevertheless, the consolidation of the ideal community in *The Crater* seems to rely on the triumph of rationality over the mode of premodern understanding by which the Kannakas conduct themselves. As the narrator relates, “It was apparent . . . to the members of the council, who watched every movement of the fleet with the utmost vigilance, that their foes were oppressed with doubts concerning the character of the place they had ventured so far to visit” (18; vol. 2). In this scene, the reader is placed in the role of the colonist, whose rational gaze mulls strategy against a savage enemy “oppressed with doubts.” Mark will go on to fire
cannons to exploit the Kannakas’ superstitions, exhibiting a familiar trope of Pacific travel literature.

The presence of hostile Kannakas also plays a key role in the formation of a community of whiteness. Early in the second volume, an imprisoned white sailor—named Brown—misleads Waally when he becomes aware of the colonists’ presence in the area. Although he is unable to identify them at first (he is, in fact, a shipmate from the Rancocus who was carried by the waves to the Kannakas’ islands), it is racial allegiance that determines his course of action. “As all Brown’s sympathies were with the unknown people of his own colour,” the narrator explains, “He kept his conjectures to himself, and managed to lead Waally in a different direction” (38; vol. 2). Here it is critical to note that the event of war is what produces a concept of racial identity. When the period of wars ends, whiteness loses its potency as a social adhesive.

**The Crater’s Utopian History**

Having established the discursive context in which *The Crater* intervenes and the manner in which it mobilizes the concept of racial difference, we can examine the formal means by which *The Crater* develops a U.S. imperial imaginary engaged with South Pacific space. However, as a text that blends generic elements, its form is difficult to articulate in simple terms. To gauge early readers’ notions on this question, it is generally a useful strategy to examine a work’s earliest reviews. Although reviews of *The Crater* are scarce, perhaps reflecting editorial animosity toward Cooper in the wake of his “war with the press,” it seems clear that *The Crater* was readily classified as a South Sea romance or Robinsonade. This can be gleaned from at least two approving articles in the
pages of *Graham’s Review* and *The Albion*. The former classes the work among Cooper’s “sea-stories” and “ocean tales” (332), while the latter calls it “a Robinson Crusoe adventure on a desert island” complete with “the settlement of a colony” (504). However, these reviews are very brief and suggest only cursory engagement with the work’s political content. Hence, for the only surviving reading of the work to address this important element it is necessary to return to “Cooper’s Last Novel,” the adversarial piece from *The Democratic Review*.

Unlike other reviews, “Cooper’s Last Novel” quickly dismisses the idea that *The Crater* is a Robinsonade. Instead, it offers the genre of the utopian travelogue, an historically older form of political writing, as the work’s major influence. While noting that it “bears a remote resemblance to the immortal work of Defoe,” the reviewer goes on to declare that “Vulcan’s Peak [the book’s central locale] bears a greater resemblance to the Utopia of Sir Thomas More than to Juan Fernandez” (438). The specificity of the writer’s allusions, here, are critical, as they reflect the entwinement of Cooper’s formal and geopolitical engagements. The first reference, to More, suggests that early readers would have recognized the text’s utopian element as an important one. The second reference, to Juan Fernandez, constitutes an indirect allusion the reviewer’s invocation of Defoe. Located off the coast of Chile, Juan Fernandez is the Pacific island group on which Scottish mariner Alexander Selkirk was marooned during the early eighteenth century. It was Selkirk’s story, reported widely, that provided Defoe with the inspiration for his novel.

That the author of “Cooper’s Last Novel” should seek to distance *The Crater* from *Robinson Crusoe* in this way illuminates an important point about the subject matter
of the two works. Although centrally engaged with colonialism and notions of Providence (both of which figure centrally in *The Crater*), Defoe’s novel presents a narrative firmly focused on the individual. By contrast, *The Crater*—much like More’s *Utopia*—is a work whose initial focus on a single traveler soon develops into a narrative about community writ large. Critically, however, the reviewer does not present this dialectic of individual and community in purely fictive terms. By referring to Selkirk and Juan Fernandez, rather than to Crusoe and his (Caribbean) island, the reviewer registers Cooper’s Pacific orientation at a time when interest in this ocean and its far flung island spaces had become a new subject of interest.

In representing the Pacific, an expansive space with which he was personally unacquainted, Cooper modifies utopian form to suit the nature of his societal critique. While utopian works are commonly set at a distance from the writer’s home community in terms of space and/or time, the logistical history of a utopia’s founding usually represents a marginal concern. In *The Crater*, however, the community’s utopian moment is firmly located within the space-time of colonization. Conceiving utopia in this way, Cooper’s text resembles a form of writing known as conjectural history—utilized in works by Rousseau, Swift, and others—that works to dramatize his stadialist conception of the rise and fall of empires.

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46 It is worth mentioning, at the outset, that although the author of “Cooper’s Last Novel” at one point declares *The Crater* a political satire, the work is not well characterized in this manner. As Ian Gordon points out, satire typically involves the “fusion of laughter and contempt” (n. pag.). Insofar as Cooper’s work does not emphasize humor as part of its critique of society, the label of satire is less applicable than that of utopia.
To date, conceptions of history have represented a common concern in criticism of *The Crater*. Charles Adams has observed that Cooper’s borrowings from Sir Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) and Charles Wilkes’s *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* (1844) indicate that *The Crater*’s Pacific context is marked by two dissonant ideas about history.47 Although Cooper’s use of Wilkes’s narrative centrally animates *The Crater*’s participation in a nascent U.S. imperial imaginary, I argue that Cooper’s anti-teleological perspective owes less to the idea of uniformity arising from Lyell’s *Principles* and more to notions of cyclicality and moralism emblematized in the paintings of Thomas Cole.

Cooper was an admirer of Cole’s series of paintings known as *The Course of Empire*. At the end of *The Crater*, when Mark Woolston returns to the site of the colony to find it lost beneath the waves of the Pacific, he likens the sight of the Peak to “that sublime rock, which is recognized as a part of the ‘everlasting hills,’ in Cole’s series of noble landscapes that is called ‘The March of Empire’” (224; vol. 2). In the series, Cole depicts a civilization during five distinct periods: the savage state, the Arcadian or pastoral state, the consummation of empire, destruction, and desolation. The “sublime

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47 “Wilkes’s *Narrative,*” Adams explains, “Is resolutely linear: it is a report from the future, dedicated to preserving by means of specimens, drawings, and narrative the ephemeral present of a Pacific culture destined to disappear” (205). “Lyell’s *Principles,*” on the other hand, “is essentially an extended argument for a conception of history that is just as resolutely cyclical” (205). While Adams concludes that Cooper is more drawn to Lyell’s notion of uniformity, he argues that history is “Cooper’s greatest adversary in his late novels. [His] approach to the present is invariably littered with shattered idols and broken promises, so that, as many commentators have recognized, these novels are marked by numerous strategies for subverting time’s progress and/or delaying the arrival of the unbearable now” (211). Another critic to comment upon *The Crater*’s representation of history is Lisa Norwood. She argues that Cooper’s work “exposes the difference between detail and history, experience and history. . . . He is . . . revealing that narratives about history are . . . stories that don’t just deal with the empirical or observable, as they claim, but instead lay claim to hidden or submerged territories” (19). I agree with Norwood’s suggestion that narratives about history always entail an appropriative gesture of laying claim, though my arguments link together Cooper’s intervention in historical narrative, utopian form, and the representation of racialized others.
rock” of which Cooper writes appears in all five installments. While, in *The Crater*, Cooper does observe the uniformity of nature, noting that it remains “ever the same amid the changes of time, and civilization, and decay,” his focus remains on the folly of humanity in succumbing to its self-destructive tendencies in a predictable cycle (224; vol. 2). This focus can be gleaned from the overtly religious message at *The Crater*’s ending. It closes with a warning to “those who would substitute the voice of the created for that of the Creator” (227; vol. 2). This final section also refers directly to Providence and the notion of a punishing God—a “dread Being”—who proffers humankind the “short-lived gift of His beneficence” (227; vol. 2). As Donald Ringe points out, Cooper and Cole were “both moralists” (27). Hence, it is a religiously-understood cycle of error and punishment, rather than the persistence of uniform natural laws that governs *The Crater*’s fundamental understanding of change in the world.

As Adams observes, Cooper’s late novels are “marked by numerous strategies for subverting time’s progress” (211). In *The Crater*, Pacific colonialism is represented as a bulwark against social decline. However, rather than representing “Cooper’s greatest adversary in his late novels,” history provides Cooper—a writer most famous for his historical romances—with a central resource for reimagining conflicts of the present (211). In *The Crater*, he magnifies the history of American merchants in the Pacific, a history unfamiliar to most of his readers, in a manner that renders his utopia an imminent possibility.

*The Crater*’s premise is built on protagonist Mark Woolston’s involvement in the earliest years of what is sometimes termed the Old China Trade. This trade began in 1783 with the sailing of the *Empress of China* from New York to Canton and ended in 1844
with the Treaty of Wangxia. By setting his work in an earlier epoch (albeit it one recently ended), rather than in his own moment, Cooper ostensibly detaches *The Crater* from the rhetoric of expansionism—and in particular the Jacksonian notion of manifest destiny—informing U.S. foreign affairs in the late 1840s. Yet, by fabricating an account of a colony in recent U.S. Pacific history, his work necessarily taps into this rhetoric, evoking political questions about the nation’s territorial limits and aspirations. While disapproving of expansion in principle, Cooper’s attraction to frontier spaces and maritime adventure renders *The Crater*’s vision of the Pacific one that does not condemn, but rather encourages, the colonizing impulse. His Pacific imaginary conceives the megaregional space of this ocean and its insular territories as a practical utopian realm. If the cyclical rise and fall of empires constitutes a universal fact of history, then the space of the colony affords an opportunity to prolong the reproduction of communal harmony by providing new outlets for what the narrator at one point terms “a healthful industry” (288; vol. 1).

To read *The Crater* in these terms is to restore its context in a late Jacksonian climate when expansionism was actively proposed as a solution to the nation’s internal discord. As the historian Thomas R. Hietala observes, “To the expansionists, acquiring land and markets for the American people was a vital, perhaps indispensable means of warding off a number of perils that they feared were about to engulf the country” (x). These included “the volatility of self-government” and “the perils to stability and harmony posed by modernization” (7). That such attitudes prevailed among Americans in the Jacksonian period suggests that even if Cooper’s intention was to propose the futility of historical progress narratives, *The Crater* entered a public sphere in which territorial
expansion was considered by many social critics to be the only solution to domestic malaise.

By narrativizing a problematic of internal strife and expansionism at a moment of historical resonance—that is, a moment at which the earliest U.S. commercial excursions into Pacific space become newly legible as prefigurations of a U.S. imperial future—Cooper harnesses the genre of conjectural historiography as a tool of utopian imagining. Traditionally speaking, conjectural histories trace the stages of human development and use conjecture to fill in the gaps of history when no directly observable causes may be gleaned from the archive of historical record. As H. M. Hopfl points out, they were a popular form among writers of the Scottish Enlightenment, who were themselves tremendously influential upon the early leaders of the United States. Hopfl comments that, as a method of historiography, conjectural history “appears to be the direct or indirect source of many of the schemes of social evolution so popular in the nineteenth century” (19). What links Cooper’s account of history in *The Crater* to the form of conjectural history first practiced in the Scottish Enlightenment, however, is its pronounced refusal of teleology. While such histories generally trace a movement from primitive to more advanced societies, they furnish no mechanism precluding social degeneration. As Hopfl puts it, “There is simply no footing here for any optimistic view about inevitable or limitless progress” (38). Even so, it is important to characterize the form, as it appears in *The Crater* as a variant of these Enlightenment histories. One major way in which *The Crater’s* conjectural history departs from traditional models is in its use of “*dei ex machinis*”—or divine interventions in its account of societal development (Hopfl 29). For example, Vulcan’s Peak simply emerges from the Ocean with trees on
it—a scientific impossibility. At the same time, however, the Pacific’s volcanic attributes furnish an air of plausibility. 48

In his Preface to The Crater, Cooper characterizes his work as a forgotten history of the early republic. “One thing we shall ever maintain,” he writes, “in the face of all who may be disposed to underrate the value of our labours . . . is [that] there is not a word in this Volume which we now lay before the reader, as grave matter of fact, that is not entitled to the most implicit credit. We scorn deception” (iv; vol. 1). Cooper soon changes key, however, replacing a telling emphasis on the valuable “labours” of the author-qua-historiographer, and introducing an important grammatical corollary. “Everything related here,” he insists, “might be just as true as Cook’s Voyages themselves” (iv-v; vol. 1). With this phrase, the author enjoins the reader to interpret his narrative as a form of conjectural history while implicitly invoking the aura of intrepid, imperial reconnaissance attaching to the figure of Cook.

In a comparative discussion of utopian, satiric, and historical genres of the late-eighteenth century, Frank Palmeri observes that “conjectural histories . . . may tend to nostalgic and utopian perspectives in part because they are set at a distance from the complications of historical specifics” (249). In The Crater, Cooper embraces conjectural history because it eschews the concreteness of facts in favor of a suggestion that what might have happened years ago, may yet occur in years to come. While, as a utopian text, it does not technically envision “a future in which most of the major problems of [its] day will have been solved,” it does project a vision of an American imperial Pacific as an

48 The emergence of new islands in the Pacific is hardly unprecedented. In 2015, for example, a new island surfaced about 28 miles northwest of the Tongan capital, Nuku’alofa. As reported by the BBC, “a large circular crater” represented a key feature of the new territory (Hughes).
inviting space of socioeconomic prosperity where a nostalgic version of virtuous, Jeffersonian democracy might be recreated (267). In this sense, it may be considered—borrowing a paradoxical phrase from Palmeri, a “utopian conjectural history of the future” (235). What lends this conjectural history a futurological hue, I contend, is its utopian confusion of space and time. As Chris Ferns reminds us, the root of the word “utopia,” Thomas More’s own sly coinage, “may be taken as either ou-topos—‘no place’, or eu-topos—‘good place’” (2). In The Crater, the slippage between these meanings proves critical to interpretation of Cooper’s imperial vista. While, on the one hand, the novel evokes the “no-place” of a history that never occurred yet might have, it simultaneously locates the “good-place,” or ideal community, in a part of the world still very much open to colonial contestation. As such, even though Cooper conceives his work as a kind of domestic moral fable, his engagement—or, indeed, entanglement—with the genres of utopia and conjectural history in the above sense multiplies the political implications of his text beyond these narrower confines.

Of these political implications, the most important derives from Cooper’s use of a utopian generic feature Fredric Jameson describes as inversion.\(^\text{49}\) Inversion, he explains, occurs at the level of the “representational relations” between “the social and historical raw materials of the Utopian construct” (Archaeologies xiii). The Crater’s most striking inversion manifests itself in the unusual circumstances of the colony’s founding. Inspired by Lyell’s Principles of Geology (1830-33), Cooper utilizes recent scientific discussions

\(^{49}\) Other common tropes of utopian literature include that of the journey, the classical dialogue or dialectical conversation, and an island setting. For more on these features, see Ferns’ Narrating Utopia (1999), Boesky’s Utopias in Early Modern England (1996), and Roemer’s Utopian Audiences (2003).
about volcanism in the construction of his plot.\textsuperscript{50} Shipwrecked on an island with friend and fellow survivor Bob Betts, Woolston is forced to “Robinson Crusoe it” until Providence makes a timely intervention (52; vol. 1). What begins, then, as an American Robinsonade takes on a broader, utopian scale as a large island—known as the Peak—emerges from the ocean as a result of an earthquake.

By combining religious, scientific, and literary discourses, Cooper’s novel strategically inverts the historical situation of western colonialism in its exploratory phase. Specifically, the colony’s timely emergence from the deep implies a divine grant—indeed, a patently manifest destiny, to Woolston and his fellow colonists. As the narrator asserts, “It was scarcely possible for man to possess any portion of this earth by a title better than that with which Mark Woolston was invested with his domains” (66; vol. 2). In crafting such a narrative, Cooper speculates on a usable, utopian past at the service of an imperial future.\textsuperscript{51} At the same time, \textit{The Crater’s} colonial plot registers cognitive dissonance with Cooper’s assessment of the political present. Refraining from any outright commitment to expansionism, he constructs his imperialist fantasy by way of historical relativism.\textsuperscript{52} “Of all the powerful nations of the present day,” he states, “America, though not absolutely spotless, has probably the least to reproach herself with,

\textsuperscript{50} For more on Cooper’s use of this source, see Scudder’s “Cooper’s \textit{The Crater}” (1947). Pacific volcanism would have been familiar to American readers in the early nineteenth century. For example, numerous American newspapers reported on the 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora in Sumbawa (modern Indonesia). This eruption, on what is now called the Pacific Ring of Fire, was one of the largest in history, killing upwards of 70,000 people and contributing to the short-term cooling of the earth.

\textsuperscript{51} Cooper refers to “the grand moral system of providence” as “revealed to us in Holy Writ” in \textit{The American Democrat} (79).

\textsuperscript{52} Cooper’s opposition to Jacksonian democracy is well documented. Not surprisingly, therefore, the longest review of his work to appear in contemporary newsprint is a largely antagonistic 1847 essay in the \textit{United States Magazine and Democratic Review}. 
on the score of lawless and purely ambitious acquisitions” (66; vol. 2). This statement prefaces another in which Cooper comments directly on the ongoing war with Mexico.

In this passage, American expansionism assumes an air of inevitability. “In the end,” he writes, “it will be found that little will be taken that Mexico could keep; and had that nation observed towards this ordinary justice and faith in her intercourse and treaties, that which has so suddenly and vigorously been done, would never have even been attempted” (66; vol. 2). Here Cooper’s engagement with the rhetoric of expansionism, however equivocal, lends itself directly to the contemporary emergence of what Paul Lyons has called an American Pacificist discourse. “The term,” Lyons writes, “developed in place of what might be considered American Pacific Orientalism, refers to a wide variety of colonial forms of representation” (16). Cooper’s ambiguity about expansionism in *The Crater*, I contend, contributes to the production of one such colonial form of representation—one that naturalizes territorial expansion on the basis of imbalanced national—and by extension racial—competencies. In other words, by writing a line like “little will be taken that Mexico could keep,” Cooper lays bare the expansionary logic that informs his own fictional narrative of U.S. Pacific dominance.

As John Demos observes, “The vast majority of eighteenth-century Americans retained their conservative and cyclical mentality, even as their experience began to move in fresher, more linear channels” (qtd. in Pratt 35-36). For Cooper, the tension between conservative and liberal temporalities extends to individuals. The self-made man, for example, which is a figure often associated with Andrew Jackson comes under fire more than once in Cooper’s work. In *The Crater*, he writes . . . Critically, the self-made man synopsizes the notion of time as progress. Related to the idea of rags-to-riches, it
emphasizes time as a measure of development. By contrast, the traditional aristocrat
synopsizes cyclicality, with its attendant notions of heredity and tradition. This can also
be glimpsed in an unduly long passage, from the work’s earliest pages, on naming
practices in the United States as compared to Europe. This culminates in an explanation
of the pronunciation of Mark’s surname. “Woolston,” we learn, is in fact pronounced
“Wooster” (2; vol. 1). What is remarkable about this passage is the way in which it
rebukes the standardization of American society and advocates for a nostalgic
traditionalism. The narrator praises European naming systems for “tell[ing] the whole
history” of a person’s “individuality” (2; vol. 1). This is followed by a jab at “New
England academ[ies]” and a longing for a world in which “Webster had not actually put
Johnson under his feet!” (2; vol. 1). In the figure of Mark Woolston, constituted
throughout as a natural aristocrat, Cooper attempts to have it both ways. His father is
bourgeois, yet he goes to see to make his own fortune. This feature of the narrative
exhibits that the cultural work of The Crater is, in important ways, at odds with itself.

Even though Cooper’s utopian vision ends with catastrophe, his insistent location
of the utopian moment in the phase of social transition—marked by transformative labors
directed at the land and destructive violence against racialized others—invigorate the
expansionary impulses at work in the United States during the early republican and
antebellum years. Although Cooper confines himself to a literary experiment with such a
time-space, his rendering of the South Pacific—a looming site of U.S. commercial
engagement and proto-imperialist exploration—as a space of futurological nostalgia,
broadens the scope of The Crater’s political fantasy well beyond the purview of his
personal assault on the press and other machines of demagogy.
Richard Slotkin has argued that “for the American writer, the conflict of cultures meant the replacement or extermination of the Indian” (473). Among the foremost authors to engage this central conflict, Cooper’s “ultimate concern in the Leatherstocking tales is the problematic character of the frontiersman – the troubling blend of European, American, and Indian elements that made him both a figure of promise and a nightmare to Cooper’s contemporaries” (493). However, in *The Crater*, Cooper selectively appropriates Pacific discourse in order to circumvent questions of “extermination” and the “troubling blend of European, American, and Indian elements.” Here the author’s attachment to classical republicanism is critical. In contrast to the teleological notion of progress, this conception of the ideal society appears pessimistic. The accelerated pace of modern life and the shrinking of the world contributes to this perspective. However, by setting *The Crater* at an historical remove, Cooper invokes the slower pace of life characteristic of that era—one that is more conducive to a view that stresses cyclicality and the hope of social regeneration. By suspending his utopia in a time just prior to the advent of industrialization in the United States, Cooper fantasizes about a society whose chief concern is a righteous battle with racialized outsiders who have no legitimate claim to the lands and other property they seek to appropriate.

**Conclusion**

By presenting *The Crater* as a conjectural history set during the earliest years of the so-called Old China Trade, I contend, Cooper constructs the South Pacific as both a site of past U.S. involvement and future opportunity. Hence, despite Cooper’s drastically different view of the “Course of Empire”—espousing stadialism over and against the
teleological view of *The Democratic Review*—he cannot help but reproduce a fantasy amenable to expansionist interests that will only gain force in the United States over the course of the nineteenth century. Although the colony of *The Crater* ultimately fails, its downfall has nothing to do with the evils of colonialism. Instead, U.S. colonialism in the Pacific appears as a remedy to domestic infighting. Consequently, it is impossible to separate *The Crater’s* fantasy of an authentic terra nullius from the imperial vista it so meticulously inaugurates. Ultimately, too, Cooper’s fatalistic concept of the rise and decline of empires actually works to heighten the appeal of a Pacific empire for the United States. By bitterly asserting the inevitable success of demagogues, Cooper suggests the futility of reform efforts and reinforces the ideology of expansionism. In this sense, rather than dissuading expansionist-minded readers from benefits of colonialism, *The Crater’s* utopian moment feeds into visions of an alluring Pacific as an extension of the nation’s frontier as a vital space of democratic exertion.
CHAPTER 2:

“Five Dusky Phantoms”: Gothic Form and Cosmopolitan Shipwreck in Melville’s Moby-Dick

Abounding with figures of racial difference, Herman Melville’s antebellum works have long occupied the attentions of nineteenth-century Americanists interested in the author’s engagement with western imperialism. In the late 1990s, two landmark works of historicist criticism, published by Samuel Otter and Geoffrey Sanborn, meticulously analyzed the ways in which Melville’s maritime fictions both reproduce and subvert racializing discourses. For Otter, Melville represents “not a transcendent but an immanent manipulator,” redirecting the uses of these discourses but still “subject to entanglement and complicity” with some of their ideological propositions and methods (6). Sanborn, on the other hand, grants Melville greater agency. Characterizing the author as a “translator” of indigenous critiques, he suggests that in Typee (1847), Moby-Dick (1851), and “Benito Cereno” (1855) Melville performs a “vital act of discursive disruption” that anticipates and, indeed, enables the emergence of a postcolonial readership (xiii).

Directing minute attention towards Melville’s representations of Polynesian islanders and black Africans, these field-changing works have led to the appearance of a number of compelling arguments concerning the author’s intervention in discourses of cannibalism, particularly in Typee and Moby-Dick, and debates about slavery in works

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53 See Carolyn Karcher Shadow Over the Promised Land and Wai Chee Dimock, Empire for Liberty.
such as “Benito Cereno.” At the same time, their lasting impact accentuates a need for analysis of racialized figures whose function in Melville continues to remain elusive. In the present study, I examine the “five dusky phantoms” of Ahab’s mysterious boat crew in *Moby-Dick*, reserving special emphasis for Fedallah, their most prominent member (180). While Sanborn groups Fedallah together with Queequeg as a “phantom of the mind” (165), I read him as a distinctive figure who replaces Ishmael’s “bosom friend” as the narrative’s most arresting racialized presence (Melville 54). By making this substitution, Melville signals a shift from the terror of cannibalism to the threat of a cunning and treacherous Malay figure. Key to this shift, I contend, is an important transformation in the author’s use of gothic form.

From around the time of *Mardi* (1849) through that of “Benito Cereno,” Melville’s engagement with the gothic undergoes a radical reorientation that disrupts conventional readings of the form as a symptomatic expression of repressed racial anxieties linked to the past. Instead, he takes advantage of the gothic’s plasticity as a cultural mechanism for mediating inchoate threats to humanist subjectivity. The Malay figure, located on the ultimate horizon of western historical development—the “almost final waters” of the Pacific, constitutes one of these hitherto unknown threats (*Moby-Dick* 368). In this sense, Melville’s Pacific gothic distinguishes itself as a surprisingly futurological mode. Attending to this feature opens a new perspective on *Moby-Dick’s*

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55 Among the few scholars who have studied these characters directly are Amirhossein Vafa, “Call Me Fedallah: Reading a Proleptic Narrative in *Moby-Dick*,” (2014); Cyrus R. K. Patell, “Cosmopolitanism and Zoroastrianism in *Moby-Dick*” (2011); and Elizabeth Shultz, “‘The Subordinate Phantoms’: Melville’s Conflicted Response to Asia in *Moby-Dick*” (2007). While these works contain valuable insights, they do not address the antebellum context of Malay vilification, attend to the broader pattern of Melville’s representation of Manilla-men and Lascars in such works as *Mardi* and “Benito Cereno,” or examine Melville’s peculiar re-orientation of the gothic. Schultz comes closest to this latter task, but historicizes the Manilla-men in terms of gothic representations of the Chinese and Japanese.
general characterization of the relationship between race and futurity. Notably, transnational criticism of the last ten to fifteen years tends to read this relationship in mostly positive terms, finding in the Pequod a model of pluralistic belonging for a globalized world to come.\textsuperscript{56} Like the postcolonial criticism of the ‘90s, however, this perspective has yet to account for Melville’s anomalous representations of Ahab’s “phantoms,” who collectively constitute an exceptional form of alterity from which the work’s cosmopolitan propositions noticeably recoil.

If it is true that Melville discovers a heterotopian prototype of global community on the decks of the American whaler, this discovery presupposes a specific vision of cosmopolitan futurity rooted in a racialized division of labor. Within this dynamic, the novel envisions racialized others playing subordinate roles in a new world economy under white American stewardship. In seeming to possess an improper ingenuity, the phantom figures of the Malays emematize forms of unthinkable futurity incompatible with this desired order. Dubbed “Manilla-men” and “Lascars” in the nautical parlance of the time, these sailors largely appear in Melville’s antebellum works as distinctively nonhuman characters, insensible to affect and the bonds of communal life. In view of

\textsuperscript{56} Becoming prominent only recently, this perspective can be traced to C. L. R. James, who argues that the crew comprises “a world-federation of modern industrial workers . . . [who] owe allegiance to no nationality . . . no allegiance to anybody or anything except the work they have to do and the relations with one another on which that work depends.” Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In (1953), 18-20. The popularity of James’s reading is demonstrated by its appearance in the mainstream press. See Emily Eakin, “Embracing the Wisdom of a Castaway,” The New York Times (August 4th, 2001). In a scholarly context, Donald Pease develops and expands C.L.R. James’s reading in a series of essays. See “C.L.R. James, Moby-Dick, and the Emergence of Transnational American Studies” (2002); “Doing Justice to C.L.R. James’s Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways” (2000); and “C.L.R. James’s Moby-Dick: The Narrative Testimony of the Non-Survivor,” (2011). For other transnational readings, see Amy Parsons, “A Careful Disorderliness: Transnational Labors in Melville’s Moby-Dick” (2012); Amy Kaplan, “Transnational Melville” (2010); Yunte Huang, Transpacific Imaginations (2008); Charles Waugh, “We are not a Nation, so much as a World: Melville’s Global Consciousness” (2005); and Christopher Sten, “Melville’s Cosmopolitanism: A Map for Living in a (Post-)Colonialist World” (1997).
such characterization, an analysis of the Malay figure allows for the expansion and revision of contemporary discussions of bare life and biopolitics, too often conceptualized in Eurocentric terms.

My argument unfolds in four parts. In the first, I establish the context of Melville’s gothic intervention by examining representations of the Malay and related figures of the Manilla-man and Lascar in American periodicals of the antebellum years. I also highlight how prevailing accounts of Malay hostility tend to obscure or diminish histories of western violence, a practice that problematizes their empirical pretensions. The second section, which begins with *Mardi* and “Benito Cereno” before moving to *Moby-Dick*, highlights Melville’s recurring deployment of these Malay-coded figures as threatening symbols indispensable to his Pacific gothic mode. In the third section, I analyze this mode’s full elaboration in *Moby-Dick* and articulate the future-oriented, biopolitical implications of its imaginary. In a brief conclusion, I examine Melville’s treatment of Manilla rope, a material object whose mutable aesthetics reaffirm the transformative power of the Pacific gothic as a technology of racialization and provide an opportunity to reconsider *Moby-Dick’s* significance in the *longue durée* of U.S. involvement in the Asia-Pacific region, a history punctuated by the colonization of the Philippines in 1898 and a series of military interventions thereafter.

“*Unsubdued and Irreclaimable*”: The Malay in American Antebellum Periodicals

Although Melville’s gothic rendering of the Malay in *Moby-Dick* makes an aesthetic departure from contemporary norms, it builds on earlier images from western
discourse. The term “Malay,” itself, constitutes a product of scientific racism. As understood in the highly influential work of Enlightenment naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, this capacious term telescopes a superregional assortment of peoples in order to broadly signify inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula and Southeast Asian archipelagoes. In literature of the American antebellum years, the term retains this telescoping quality while tending to locate its referents in Asian-Pacific, as opposed to South Asian, spaces. This tendency can be explained by the relative lack of U.S. involvement in the Indian subcontinent, which was controlled by the British; and the relative preponderance of U.S. mariners in Pacific waters during an era historian Jean Heffer has called a “golden age of [the U.S.] merchant navy” (45).

This golden age was not without its share of violent conflict. In the years 1832 and 1838, Malay pirates attacked two American vessels—the Friendship and the Eclipse, massacring their crews. These events elicited U.S. naval reprisals in the first and second Sumatran expeditions. Consequently, the figure of the treacherous Malay in U.S. print culture first emerges in a climate of racialized antagonism. An article from the May 1837 issue of The Albion, published in New York, exhibits the essentializing rhetoric to which this figure was subject. “The great body of the Malay nation,” it reads, “is unsubdued and irreclaimable, even a domesticated Malay is like a wild beast half-tamed—his appetite for blood and violence is excited at the slightest provocation” (“The

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57 See On the Natural Varieties of Mankind (1776).
58 Although a direct comparison is not commonly made in periodicals of the antebellum period, public attitudes towards Malays (often Muslim by faith) may have been influenced by the popularity of Barbary captivity narratives among American readers during the early part of the nineteenth century. For more on the impact of the Barbary wars on the American public sphere and its role in the expansion of the U.S. navy, see Lawrence A. Peskin, Captives and Countrymen: Barbary Slavery and the American Public, 1785-1816 (2009) and Paul Baepler, introduction to White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives (1999).
Malay Pirates” 168). The notion of the Malay as a “wild beast” is significant in itself, but so too is the notion of “domestication.” As implied in this text’s racial imaginary, some forms of difference are manageable and others are not.\(^{59}\) Representations of the Malay’s extreme alterity may be found in children’s literature of the period. Ideologically transparent texts with a clear didactic function, they evidence how a particular image of the Malay was inculcated in the minds of nineteenth-century American readers.

In an 1848 piece for the *Boys’ and Girls’ Magazine and Fireside Companion*, Francis Forrester writes, “Malays are dreaded as pirates by the people of Asia. They pursue plunder or conquest with awful daring; they have no mercy for strangers, and their friendship is uncertain. A small offence they take as an insult, which they revenge with frenzy and fury.” While Forrester admits that “some writers . . . maintain that . . . the oppressions of their conquerors have driven them to this course of proceeding,” he ends with a declaration that piracy is “deeply rooted in [the Malay’s] nature” (“Malay Village” 138). In 1851, the same magazine published “A Malay Story.” “Our readers would enjoy them [Malays] very little as neighbors,” Forrester remarks, “[since] their frequent intercourse and commerce with other nations have failed to raise them from a degrading barbarism” (116). Again, Forrester admits that Malays “have often had their revengeful feelings aroused by the short-sighted, selfish villainy of those who traded with them,” before resolving the question with an anecdote of a certain “Captain D—” who “knew the Malays well; and although he had always dealt with them honestly, . . . never felt sure of

\(^{59}\) Such an understanding of graded savageries, I will later explain, contributes to Melville’s reservations about cosmopolitanism in *Moby-Dick* and expresses the logic of a common stereotype. For an important early study of Malay stereotypes, see Hussein Syed Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977).
Practicing a selective empiricism, which naturalizes piracy as an essential and self-evident tendency of the Malay people, Forrester works to diminish an historical context of colonial violence and discredits the legitimacy of native retaliation towards forms of unwanted political and economic domination. Additionally, his assertion of the Malay’s un-neighborly behavior prototypes a metaphor of the global village, a projection of western-directed cosmopolitan futuruty (particularly in an article for children), from which the Malay must be excluded.

Construed as a figure bitterly at odds with western ways, the Malay stereotype functions as a kind of ur-text for interpreting phenotypically similar groups. In the Pacific, poor working conditions aboard American whalers and merchant vessels drove many sailors to desertion, causing captains to draw on local populations to replace them. The racializing terms “Lascar” and “Manilla-man” came to denominate members of two distinct, but related groups of contract laborers serving on western vessels. The former typically hailed from South Asia, while the latter originated in the Philippines.

60 Ibid. According to Daniel Heller-Roazen, the disregard of reciprocity constitutes a key feature of the pirate in western juridical texts since Cicero. See The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations (2009).

61 Philippine Islanders had been serving aboard European vessels since the sixteenth century, when they began providing crews for Spanish Galleons traveling between Manilla and Acapulco, trading Chinese goods for New World gold and silver. For the definitive study of the Pacific galleon trade, see William Lytle Schurz, The Manilla Galleon (1939). Although the term “Manilla-man” is an ostensible geographical reference—to the Manilla Isles or Philippines, it is worth pointing out that the sailors hailed from all areas of these islands and not just the confines of the Spanish imperial capital. As Filomeno Aguilar, Jr. points out, a substantial number of these sailors hailed from the city of Zamboanga on the southern island of Mindanao. “Manilamen and Seafaring: Engaging the Maritime World Beyond the Spanish Realm” (2012). The term “Lascar” is more opaque in geographic specificity, referring to native sailors from a much larger area. A contemporary understanding of this term’s coverage in the era of Moby-Dick’s composition can be gleaned from the 1852-53 Sessional Papers of the British House of Lords. In this text, the Earl of Ellenborough questions Robert Wigram Crawford, head of a colonial trading house in Bombay, about the Lascars who manned his vessels. Crawford defines a Lascar as a “native seaman . . . from any part” of British India and its surrounding areas. Crawford also mentions Parsees—Zoroastrians of Persian origin—in this exchange, noting that members of this ethnic group control most of the interior trade along the Indus along with “other natives” (174). When used by cultural outsiders, therefore, specific terms of ethnic description such as “Parsee,” could be nested within broader designations such as “Lascar.” It is also notable that—according to the Oxford English Dictionary—the word “Lascar” may derive from the Persian
to the jaundiced eye of popular perceptions, these figures soon became racial palimpsests, emerging as threatening figures of a barely concealed Malay treachery.

As with the Malay, perceptions of Manilla-men and Lascars stemmed from a skewed empiricism, often relying on factual, but unbalanced accounts of violence at sea. American newspapers of the period report a number of mutinies involving these sailors, including one in 1830 where “five Manilla men . . . rose upon the ship’s company, and murdered the captain, second mate, carpenter, boatswain and cook, and took charge of the ship for eight days” (“Mutiny at Sea” 2). Accounts of violent and disloyal Lascars appeared in stories about the brig Rival. In 1850, papers reported that a Lascar sailor murdered the ship’s mate and seriously injured the captain.62 Similarly, an article from 1851 reports that underwriters in Calcutta and Bombay refused to insure ships “manned by Lascar seamen” due to “recent cases of ship burning” (“Additional Foreign Intelligence by the Arctic” 2). Manilla-men, in particular, were linked to Malay piracy. In his Narrative of Voyages and Travels, Amasa Delano describes Manilla-men as “peculiarly savage.” “The English will not insure a ship,” he adds, “if she has as many as five or six of these people on board. Many sufferings and losses have been experienced from them, and they are often associated with the Malays in piratical attacks on ships” (166).63 In a world increasingly obsessed with race, Delano’s remarks signal a particularly modern anxiety: that community is as much afflicted by the barbarian beyond as the barbarian within. A flickering image of the Manilla-man or Lascar as a cunning,

word “lashkar,” meaning “army” or “camp,” demonstrating the broad sweep of the term within a western colonial context.


63 Some critics have shown that Melville partially derives his descriptions of Asians from the works of Amasa Delano and Charles Wilkes. For work on Delano, see Harold H. Scudder, “Melville’s Benito Cereno and Captain Delano’s Voyages” (1928). For Wilkes, see David Jaffé, “Some Origins of Moby-Dick: New Finds in an Old Source” (1957).
piratical threat, speaks directly to this fear and, as I will later demonstrate, centrally animates Melville’s gothic art.

While most western accounts in this period mobilize versions of the treacherous Malay stereotype, a number of alternative accounts exist. For example, the travel narratives of American sea captain Benjamin Morrell and his wife, Abby, problematize the image of the random, inconstant Manilla-man by revealing its contingency on the behavior of western officers and crews. In A Narrative of Four Voyages (1832), Benjamin recalls engaging the services of sixty-six Manilla-men to serve upon his vessel the Antarctic in July 1830. “Several merchants and ship-masters, of different nations” attempt to dissuade him from this “hazardous enterprise,” repeating “a great number of legendary tales of fine ships that had been cut off by these men . . . even when there were only two or three of them on board” (417). Morrell proceeds with his large crew of Manilla-men anyway. In Narrative of a Voyage (1833) Abby Morrell explains Benjamin’s decision. “My husband,” she recalls, “Contended that [the Manilla-men’s] resentments in former cases had been aroused by improper treatment, and [therefore] he would try the experiment” (59). This “experiment” received an important test in December of 1830, when the crew was subjected to a period of strict rationing. “As we had been on short allowance for many days . . . I feared [this] would create some disturbance on board; but when the sailors and Manilla men saw that we in the cabin were on allowance also, they were kept quiet as lambs—so easy is it to govern others when we can govern ourselves” (86). While uncommonly expressed, the Morrells’ sympathetic (if still paternalistic) narrative is corroborated by other voices of the period, such as that of British consul Robert MacMicking, who spent three years in Manilla from
1848 to 1850. Collectively, these contrary depictions serve to fracture the essentialism of the treacherous Malay stereotype dominant in newspaper accounts of the early nineteenth century.

As I will ultimately demonstrate, Melville’s representations of Malays bear traces of this stereotype while exhibiting key formal interventions. Because they have been so seldom discussed, however, it will be useful to survey and briefly analyze some of the author’s references to Lascars and Manilla-men as a preface to my general assessment of *Moby-Dick’s* Pacific gothic imaginary.

“Lascars, or Manilla-men”: The Malay in Melville’s Pacific Works

That threatening images of Manilla-men and Lascars should appear in the pages of *Mardi* and “Benito Cereno,” and not *Moby-Dick* alone, deepens their significance in the author’s Pacific imaginary. An early passage in *Mardi* (1849) furnishes a clear, if relatively simple, example of how the gothic enacts a racialized conditioning of aesthetic responses in Melville’s texts. Approaching a derelict brig (the *Parki* of Lahina), the narrator recalls, “I could not but distrust the silence that prevailed. It conjured up the idea of miscreants concealed below, and meditating treachery; unscrupulous mutineers—Lascars, or Manilla-men; who, having murdered the Europeans of the crew, might not be willing to let strangers depart unmolested” (718). In this passage, Melville’s innovation is

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64 See *Recollections of Manilla and the Philippines, During 1848, 1849, and 1850*, pp. 146-47.
65 One notable exception to Melville’s gothic characterization of Lascars in this period occurs in Chapter 34 of *Redburn*, where the protagonist encounters a crew of Lascars and converses with one named “Dallabdoollmans.” While Redburn is more sympathetic to Lascars than other characters—an English cabin-boy recalls the deaths of several Lascars “much as a farmer would about the loss of so many sheep by the murrain, while “inquisitive old ladies [on the docks] seemed to regard the strange sailors as a species of wild animal”—he nonetheless likens them to extraterrestrials. Of *Dallabdoollmans*, he observes, “his experiences are like a man from the moon—wholly strange, a new revelation.” See Herman Melville, *Redburn*, pp. 198-200.
to position the Malay at the center of the gothic’s most recognizable motif: the sudden emergence of terrors “concealed below,” which, in literary criticism, has long been associated with Freud’s theory of the uncanny and its central concept of the return of the repressed (132). It is therefore critical to note Melville’s choice of Malay-coded figures, who do not (at this stage of American history) rebuke any common sense of guilt tied to past racial oppression, but instead represent emergent others constructed, through gothic devices, as new sources of universal threat. Six years later, the text of “Benito Cereno” (1855) marks the final time Melville would represent Malays in this fashion. Comparing its vision of the Malay to that which appears in Mardi casts light on the gothic elaboration this figure receives in Moby-Dick (1851).

Notably, the action of “Benito Cereno,” which takes place off the coast of Chile, dramatizes the horrors of the largely transatlantic slave trade in Pacific waters. That the text is a rewriting of an episode from Amasa Delano’s voyages does not detract from the significance of this hydrographic shift, insofar as it allows Melville to mobilize a gothic symbology of his own design. Upon first boarding the San Dominick, a fictionalized Delano (whose distaste for Manilla-men we have already examined) mulls the unnerving sensation of entering a ship occupied by foreign bodies. “Always upon first boarding a large and populous ship at sea,” he reflects, “Especially a foreign one, with a nondescript crew such as Lascars or Manilla men . . . the living spectacle it contains, upon its sudden and complete disclosure, has, in contrast with the blank ocean which zones it, something of the effect of enchantment.” Delano’s specific reference to “Lascars or Manilla Men” in this moment underscores the exceptional place accorded them in Melville’s Pacific gothic imaginary, while his classification of such sailors as “nondescript” subtly testifies to their
transition, in fiction, from objects of ethnological description to symbols of inhuman threat. Whereas, in the earlier Mardi, the danger of the Malay was confined to the local space of an abandoned vessel, in “Benito Cereno” it has broadened in scope, a dilation that reflects the author’s prolonged engagement with the figure in Moby-Dick. For Delano, Malay sailors render any ship “unreal,” while their “strange costumes, gestures, and faces” present “a shadowy tableau just emerged from the deep, which directly must receive back what it gave” (677). Specters of threatening, if not uncanny, emergence, the “shadowy” presences of Lascars and Manilla-men portend maritime catastrophe and, in so doing, subtly gesture to the wreck of the Pequod in Moby-Dick.

Appearing just before “The First Lowering” (Chapter 48), Ahab’s boat crew, comprising Fedallah and four Manilla-men, are introduced as “five dusky phantoms” (180). The image of the phantom, I will later demonstrate, is paramount to Melville’s future-facing reorientation of the gothic. At the same time, a connection to animal savagery, witnessed in the “vivid, tiger-yellow complexion” of the Manilla-men, renders their ghostly presence physically threatening (181). Anything but offhand hyperbole, the phrase “tiger-yellow” derives rhetorical force from an intertextual resonance that may be lost on today’s readers. In the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, tigers captured the literary imagination. With a reputation for making unprovoked attacks on humans, this creature, represented to western readers through accounts of colonial life, came to be considered one the most ferocious, natural threats to life in South and Southeast Asia. In his Animal Kingdom (1817), Georges Cuvier describes the tiger as “the most cruel of quadrupeds, [. . .] the scourge of the East Indies” (95). Scottish naturalist William Jardine concurs, writing that “in many places [the tiger] is the scourge of the country, and neither
man nor beast can with safety inhabit the districts which he has selected for his own.”

Jardine also notes the tiger’s appearance of “treachery and wanton cruelty” (139).  

Juxtaposed with literary descriptions of piratical Malays, themselves construed as exceptional threats to civilized life, it is not hard to see why the image of the tiger would appeal to Melville in his characterization of the Manilla-men. Throughout *Moby-Dick*, the phrase “tiger yellow” becomes a kind of Homeric epithet or leitmotif. At least three reviews of *Moby-Dick* reproduce the phrase in their compact columns, suggesting its mnemonic hold on contemporary readers. That it should appear before nouns such as “creatures” and “barbarians” further contributes to the interpellation of Manilla-men as irreclaimable savages (183, 421).  

First as phantoms, then as tigers, the Manilla-men singularly confound Ishmael’s powers of description. As hostile hybrids, they produce an aura at once viciously embodied and intangible. The gothic application of such traits to these sailors becomes the trademark of *Moby-Dick*’s vexed cosmopolitanism. Through its lens, Manilla-men emerge as members of “a race notorious for a certain diabolism of subtilty, and by some honest white mariners supposed to be the paid spies and secret confidential agents on the water of the devil, their lord, whose counting-room they suppose to be elsewhere” (181).

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66 Jardine also describes the tiger’s color as a “bright tawny yellow,” which corroborates Melville’s use of the color (140). On the other hand, Cuvier describes the tiger as having a “bright reddish-buff” (95).

67 See, for examples, review of *Moby-Dick*, *Atlas (London)*, November 8, 1851; review of *Moby-Dick*, *Literary Gazette (London)*, December 6, 1851; and review of *Moby-Dick*, *Morning Chronicle (London)*, December 20, 1851.

68 For occurrences of the phrase “tiger yellow,” see pages 181 and 410. Notably, Melville’s representations can be read as prototypes for an image of the Malay-as-tiger that would reappear in subsequent works of nineteenth-century American fiction. In his story “The Malay Proa” (1855), Sylvanus Cobb writes, “a Malay pirate is just about the worst thing in the world—bloodthirsty as a Bengal tiger, with all the wit of man to back it up” (299). In J. C. Cremony’s “The Story of a Survivor” (1869), a shipwrecked crew is driven to cannibalism at the suggestion of a Malay crewmember—a “wonderfully active and vigorous man”—who is twice compared to a “tiger” (80-81).
Here the Poe-esque phrase “diabolism of subtilty” constructs Malay ingenuity as a form of racial trespass—something I will discuss at greater length in the next section—while the counterpoint of “honest white mariners” against “paid spies and secret confidential agents” gilds white capitalist ventures in the Pacific with a veneer of morality while tarring Malay resistance to the same with the brush of mercenary self-interest. Still, if this constellation of phantoms, animals, devils, and mercenaries comprises a symbolic structure within which the Malay figure gains gothic meaning, it is Fedallah whose star burns brightest and reads most like an omen.

By rendering Fedallah an inhabitant of “the Oriental isles to the east of the continent” (i.e. Southeast Asia), Melville muddies the waters of his ethnic specificity as a Parsee while implicitly linking him to the figure of the treacherous Malay (191). His clothing, in particular, mimics the telescoping quality of the term “Malay” itself, which conflates peoples of South and Southeast Asia. “A rumpled Chinese jacket of black cotton funereally invested him,” Ishmael states, “With wide black trowsers of the same dark stuff. But strangely crowning this ebonness was a glistening white plaited turban, the living hair braided and coiled round and round upon his head” (181). Likewise, he exhibits an uncertain skin color. Described by Ishmael as “tall and swart,” he is later called a “gamboge ghost” by Stubb (181, 259).69 Such details of appearance—Chinese suit and Indian turban, a complexion somewhere between brown and yellow—secure Fedallah’s Malay moorings, but present insuperable obstacles to a mono-ethnic reading of his character. Seen in this light, Fedallah is very much a Lascar, a figure of the gothic Malay. Like them, he resembles a “ghost-devil” (335). Like them, too, he moves with the

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69 According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “swart” denotes something “dark in colour; black or blackish; dusky.” Gamboge is “the colour of gamboge [resin]; dull or dark orangey or mustard yellow.”
“noiseless celerity” of a specter (181). In and through these crucial resemblances, Melville’s portrait of Fedallah compiles and coordinates disparate racializing signifiers in a manner that transposes the combinative reductionism of racial science to the symbolic register of a new Pacific gothic imaginary.

“Phantom Futures”: The Pacific Gothic in Moby-Dick

Since the publication of Leslie Fiedler’s Love and Death in the American Novel (1960), critical consensus has moved towards readings of the gothic as symptomatic of American racial anxieties. Specifically, Fiedler argues that collective guilt over Indian genocide and the practice of slavery constitutes the central preoccupation of the nation’s quintessentially gothic tradition.70 In the last few years, however, early Americanists and scholars of the transatlantic have contested this psychoanalytic perspective. By departing from what they call Fiedler’s “anxiety model” (Roberts 20), they contend that the gothic instead constitutes “an important cultural site for the formation rather than merely the reflection of phobic categories . . . recruit[ing] its readers into the ideological defense” of threatened values, ideas, or ways of life (Roberts 22).71 As the passage suggests, this new perspective takes a central interest in the affirmative—as opposed to negative—function played by the gothic in Anglo-American literary culture, demonstrating, in practice, the


ways in which the exclusions of gothic others are always subsidiary to the creation of inclusive subject positions or modes of communal belonging.\footnote{Another important reappraisal of gothic form can be found in James D. Lilley’s *Common Things*. Lilley similarly contends that the “gothicity” of a text should not “be measured by the symbolic anxiety of its content” and that instead the gothic—which he says “names modernity’s central aesthetic regime”—“also identifies a formal aesthetic program that conjures up the generic specters—the common things—of modern community” (78).}

While I appreciate the value of this shift in focus, my central concern in the present study remains with the exclusionary mechanism of Melville’s Pacific gothic. This concern, which seeks to illustrate the limits of *Moby-Dick*’s undeniably attractive, pluralistic models of community, has everything to do with my reading of the form’s partial, negative function. For Sian Silyn Roberts, whose recent work informs my own, the diasporic context from which the early American gothic emerges directly fosters a double interest in the grounds of communitarian exclusion and new possibilities of subjectivity. Yet Silyn Roberts’s analysis draws primarily on works in which the gothic represents the dominant formal paradigm. With *Moby-Dick*, the case is altered. In contrast to many other works of the period, it engages numerous literary forms without finally resolving into a single genre. As a multi-form text, it delegates different sorts of cultural work to different formal registers. While the gothic aesthetically legislates Malay exclusion, other forms imagine alternative modes of community.\footnote{In Chapter 40 (“Midnight, Forecastle”), the multivocality of dramatic form articulates the *Pequod*’s cosmopolitan potential. Here, a “Lascar Sailor” makes an appearance and speaks briefly. That this Lascar, who goes unmentioned in the rest of the novel, should appear in this section presents a notable instance in which the general vilification of Malays—whose presences are ordinarily mediated through the gothic mode—momentarily abates. Yet the provisional quality of “Midnight, Forecastle” should also be underlined here. What begins with merrymaking erupts into a “row” between Daggoo and a drunk Spanish sailor who has insulted him with a racist remark (151). Impactful as this fleeting cosmopolitan vista may be, it is an exceptional, inhuman image of the Malay that predominates.} Yet precisely because these imaginings remain vexed by the figure of the Malay, I find it useful to develop Silyn Roberts’s argument that “the gothic defines rather than reflects the object of fear”
In the following pages, I argue that rather than symptomatically expressing the racial anxieties of America’s collective unconscious, Melville’s gothic itself constructs Malays as symbols of irreclaimable communitarian exception who pose a unique threat to projections of cosmopolitan futurity.

Before attending to the biopolitical workings of this form, however, it is necessary to address *Moby-Dick*’s treatment of the racializing gaze and the extent to which the novel can be said to subvert its distortional aesthetics. One might argue, for example, that because Melville so memorably deconstructs the psychology of racial prejudice in the “The Spouter-Inn” (the chapter in which Ishmael first meets Queequeg), his gothic portrayal of Malay alterity loses something of its symbolic consequence. To do so, however, is to emphasize one moment in the work’s engagement with race at the expense of its holistic development. As much as Ishmael and Queequeg’s friendship matters, I contend, so too does the overall narrative’s shift away from the friendly figure of the Polynesian and towards the villainous one of the Malay. As Sanborn himself notes, Queequeg “simply drops out of the narrative” (125). The surprising abandonment of this liminal character—“a creature in the transition state” between savagery and civilization—muffles the chords of toleration and interracial friendship Melville so earnestly strikes at the beginning of the novel (38).

Even discounting this sea change in focus, a close reading of “The Spouter-Inn” reveals that Melville’s vision of interracial harmony mobilizes an Enlightenment conception of the human possessed of its own exclusionary logic. After learning he

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74 As Walter D. Mignolo observes, “a particular [as opposed to universal] conception of the ‘modern subject,’ an idea of Man, introduced in the European Renaissance, became the model for the Human and for Humanity, and the point of reference for racial classification and global racism” (19).
must share a bed with a “‘dark complexioned’ harpooneer,” Ishmael is first beset by a host of anxieties (29). Eventually, however, he begins “to think that after all [he] might be cherishing unwarrantable prejudices.” Complaining to the landlord, Peter Coffin, he attributes them to narrative practices reminiscent of the gothic. “You persist,” he states, “In telling me the most mystifying and exasperating stories, tending to beget in me an uncomfortable feeling towards the man whom you design for my bedfellow” (31). These lines speak directly to the mystifying power of the gothic, whose traditional emphasis on the inscrutable exploits the axiom that “ignorance is the parent of fear” (34).

Nevertheless, it is only when Ishmael decides that Queequeg is “a human being just as I am: . . . [with] as much reason to fear me as I have to be afraid of him” that his previous gothic conception starts to dissolve (36). Critically, this universalizing notion of the human distinguishes *Moby-Dick* from a Romantic conception of Anglo-Saxonism on the rise in Melville’s time. As Reginald Horsman notes, “American Romantics were less interested in the features uniting mankind and nations than in the features separating them” (159). In theory, then, Melville’s universalism presents an ecumenical foil to his contemporaries’ fixations on racial particularity. In practice, however, it does not fully abandon racial antagonism. Instead, it transposes the markers of ontological division to another register, one in which certain forms of life are designated human while others are not. This shift proves indispensable to *Moby-Dick*’s Pacific gothic, as it allows Melville

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75 A similar sentiment, vis-à-vis the figure of the human, also registers a key difference between Fedallah’s dehumanization and the extreme alterity of a figure such as Bartleby. Yet, at the end of “Bartleby,” the narrator speaks of a “bond of a common humanity” with the titular character and an accompanying sense of “fraternal melancholy” in contemplating his death (65). “Bartleby” is therefore a story about a man trying to come to terms with signs of inhumanity emanating from a white body—“a pale young scrivener”—he implicitly perceives to be human (60). Just the opposite is true of Fedallah in *Moby-Dick*, where the inhuman Malay constitutes an immediate, common symbol of radical exceptionality.
to imagine the possibility of cosmopolitan harmony while transferring his reservations about the same to an irreducible limit case.

In adjudicating this distinction, Melville’s discourse of the human allows us to more concretely engage critical reappraisals of biopolitics: a concept still broadly influential in the Humanities and Social Sciences. While analyses of biopolitics originate in the works of Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt, its most prominent articulation can be found in Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* (1995). Developing the work of his predecessors, Agamben investigates a Classical dialectic between forms of life—*zoê* (natural life) and *bios* (political life)—from which a third term, bare life, emerges to name the modern “referent” and “effect of sovereign violence” (Ziarek n. pag.). While bare life provides a useful starting point from which to survey the mechanics of Melville’s Pacific gothic, its teleological assumptions concerning race limit its analytic potential. In particular, by placing such heavy emphasis on the historical event and political logic of the Holocaust, the accounts of Agamben and Foucault have the unfortunate side effect of trivializing the application of bare life in colonial contexts.

In his recent book *Habeas Viscus* (2014), Alexander G. Weheliye critiques this trend, arguing that “racializing assemblages,” or sets of “sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans,” play a much more central role in the construction of bare life than has been previously suggested (4). Moreover, he argues that such assemblages reach well beyond the geospatial confines of Europe. “If Agamben and Foucault are to be believed,” he explains, “All interpretations of race, ethnicity, and racism that are not immediately tied to Nazism . . . are crude, simplistic, prehistorical, and undeserving of sustained critical attention, which, as a
consequence, naturalizes traditional racial and/or ethnic delimiters” (64). As a corrective, Weheliye calls for increased critical attention to the “techniques by which bare life is affixed to bodies of specific Homo sapiens so that their expulsion from humanity appears to spring from their biological inferiority and appears, therefore, warranted” (69).

By affixing markers of bare life to the Malay, Melville contributes to the establishment of a new “racializing assemblage” aimed at Asian-Pacific space. In evidence throughout the novel—and especially its second half—the stakes of this affixation are first delimited by Starbuck, the Pequod’s conscience-stricken first mate. Spurred by the revels of the ship’s “heathen crew,” he laments, “Oh, life! ’tis now that I do feel the latent horror in thee! but ’tis not me! That horror’s out of me! And with the soft feeling of the human in me, yet will I try to fight ye, ye grim phantom futures!” (144). In a work nearly devoid of female characters, Melville here reformulates the traditional figure of the “suffering heroine”—an “indispensable” element of gothic form—by placing the speaker in the feminine position of threatened virtue (Wester 7). Traces of this convention may be discerned in the evocation of “soft[ness],” an historically gendered quality, along with the “small touch of human mothers” he ascribes to the “heathen crew.” At the end of the novel, with the ship’s destruction imminent, Starbuck again appears in a feminized light. “Let not Starbuck die,” he exclaims, “In a woman’s fainting fit” (425). In each case, the gothic quality of Starbuck’s speech lies in its iteration of a generically-familiar rhetorical situation, which, revisiting a phrase from
Silyn Roberts, “recruits [the] reade[r] into the ideological defense of [a] threatened category” (22).76

From the standpoint of Starbuck’s besieged humanism, the “heathen crew” appear as animals “whelped somewhere by the sharkish sea” (144). As the narrative develops, this biopolitical ascription is directed increasingly towards Malay figures. Moreover, by representing racial otherness in terms of animal hostility, Starbuck anticipates Ishmael’s conceit of the “tiger yellow” Manilla-men. Likewise, his arrogation of the “soft feeling of the human” to the white body, in combination with Ishmael’s provisional extension of the same to Queequeg, contrasts sharply with the novel’s repeated figurations of Malay inhumanity. Repeatedly, its language of gothic terror inscribes signifiers of bare life—i.e. life marked for death—onto the bodies of Malay sailors. A clear example of this occurs on the last day of “The Chase,” in Chapter 135, when a school of sharks seeks after the “musky” flesh of the “tiger yellow barbarians” without “molesting the othe[r]” boat crews (422). For these bare lives, we are led to believe, the prospect of a violent death is made to appear almost inevitable (144). In a more general sense, however, the bare life of Malays manifests in their unique proximity to Ahab, who, as “a great lord of Leviathans,” represents the novel’s central model of perverse, gothic sovereignty (113).77 Critically, this nearness of association, which finds them virtually imprisoned below deck for the

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76 The feminization of white humanism is not unique to this moment. Ishmael, for example, often occupies a feminized role relative to Queequeg. It is only in Starbuck’s speech, however, that it appears in such distinctly gothic terms.

77 While sharing in Weheliye’s critique of Foucault’s overly narrow account of biopolitical racism, I continue to find value in the latter’s assessment of the gothic novel. Foucault’s Eurocentrism, while problematic, presents no obstacle to an analysis of the gothic’s original context. Like Foucault, I read the gothic as a resolutely political form, which, in its European heyday was “always about the abuse of power and exactions . . . unjust sovereigns, pitiless and bloodthirsty seigneurs, arrogant priests, and so on” (212). A fixation on perverse manifestations of power, I contend, travels with the gothic as it migrates to other geographical and historical contexts.
first part of the voyage, is never represented as a basis for readerly sympathy. Instead, their excessive alterity is constructed as a pressing threat to the Pequod’s tolerant “community of interest” (126). If, as Weheliye suggests, racializing assemblages initiate a division of populations in accordance with figures of the human, not-quite-human, and nonhuman, Melville’s Pacific gothic engages this taxonomy by assigning to Malay characters the full stigma of its alienating third term.

Melville’s selection of the Malay as an exceptional other has everything to do with Moby-Dick’s privileging of Pacific Oceanic space, the futurist connotations of which directly inform the author’s reorientation of gothic temporality. From its earliest incarnation, gothic romance is commonly understood as a genre preoccupied with history. In the preface to The Castle of Otranto (1764), Horace Walpole notes how the pre-Enlightenment “dark ages” furnish raw material for the gothic’s plethora of “miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events” (4). In a nineteenth-century American context, Nathaniel Hawthorne maintained that gothic romance “attempt[s],” by definition, “to connect a by-gone time with the very Present that is flitting away from us” (iv). What makes Melville’s Pacific gothic so innovative, therefore, is its alternative fixation on the future. In Moby-Dick, a vision of contested global futurity registers the vanishing point at which humanist desires and racial antagonisms dissonantly converge.

Eschewing the comforts of teleology, this aleatory concept of history becomes the basis for a new configuration of gothic horrors. Witness, here, Starbuck’s peculiar apprehension of “grim phantom futures.” Melville develops this cryptic phrase from an earlier usage in Mardi, where, in a less grim sense, it broadly signifies an illusory
projection of the mind’s “fiery yearnings” (1214). In *Moby-Dick*, however, the word “phantom” accrues a distinctly gothic resonance by virtue of its materialization in Ahab’s “five dusky phantoms.” To appreciate Melville’s representation of the Malay as a harbinger of gothic futurity, it is first necessary to examine the cosmopolitan logics and desires its presence seems so acutely to disrupt. In “The Advocate” (Chapter 24), Melville characterizes the American whaling industry as a forerunner of cosmopolitan globality. There, Ishmael opines “that the cosmopolite philosopher cannot, for his life, point out one single peaceful influence, which within the last sixty years has operated more potentially upon the whole broad world, taken in one aggregate, than the high and mighty business of whaling” (98). Additionally, his description of the crew as “Isolatoes . . . federated along one keel” (107) recalls the cosmopolitan rubric of Immanuel Kant’s “Perpetual Peace” (1795), an essay predicting the gradual emergence of a worldwide “pacific federation” (104). Yet, pacifist as these statements may seem, they strike clear imperialist overtones.

While Ishmael states that, until the heyday of the American whaler, the Pacific saw “no commerce but colonial,” he later seems to contradict himself, observing that “the uncounted isles of all Polynesia . . . do commercial homage to the whale-ship, that cleared the way for the missionary and the merchant” (99). Seen against the long history of imperialism in the Pacific, it is impossible to read these lines without recalling the slow violence of U.S. intervention in places like Hawai‘i. Even so, it is quite clear that Ishmael genuinely valorizes the work of whaling and associates it with a feeling of cosmopolitan brotherhood. This sense of an affective bond clearly emerges in the late chapter “A Squeeze of the Hand” (Chapter 94). Here, the pleasurable labor of squeezing
whale sperm produces an ecstasy of universalist, fraternal feeling. “Oh! My dear fellow beings,” he proclaims, “Why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round . . . let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness” (323). Such lines poignantly exhibit the timbre of the novel’s cosmopolitan rhetoric, a discourse that periodically erupts like a “fiery yearnin[g],” only to dissipate, once more, in a gothic gloom of oceanic proportion. A few pages later, “The Try-Works” (Chapter 96) presents a hellish and foreboding image of “the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a [whale] corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, [which] seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander’s soul” (327).

From amidst this dense darkness comes the Malay, a demon of rare “subtilty.” An archaic term signifying “cunning,” “ingenuity,” and “acuteness of thought or intellect,” “subtilty” here registers a threatening racial impropriety. However, it is important to note that this ascription sets Melville apart from his contemporaries. Most sources represent Malay violence as singularly irrational. One may recall, for example, Francis Forrester’s assertion of their matchless “frenzy and fury.” This tendency was due, in large part, to sensationalized accounts of a practice known as running amok. To “run a muck,” in antebellum accounts, was to embark on a mindless killing spree. While many reports associate this phenomenon with opium use, others characterize it as an expression of the Malay’s uniquely savage essence. In any case, “running a muck” becomes, by the 1840s, an established idiom in American public discourse. Most notably, it was

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78 See The Oxford English Dictionary, “subtilty.”
79 For more on the practice and for an illuminating analysis of Malays in Conrad’s Lord Jim, see Sanjay Krishnan’s Reading the Global: Troubling Perspectives on Britain’s Empire in Asia (2007).
employed—on several occasions—as a metaphor for articulating domestic political antagonism. Arguing for a Home Tariff to alleviate the nation’s large trade deficit, an 1841 issue of the *Berkshire County Whig* likens the policy of Van Buren’s Democratic administration to the “Malay, bent on his career of ruin, called, ‘running a muck’” (“A Home Market” 2). Likewise, in 1847, the *Evening Post* of New York excoriates “whig writers at Washington” for adopting a “Malay policy . . . of running a muck, and striking, thrusting and spattering at random” (“Correspondence” 2).\(^8^0\) Regardless of a writer’s party affiliation, therefore, the metaphor of the Malay running *amok* served as a literary commonplace with a distinct pattern of usage.

In view of this trend, Melville’s Pacific gothic intervenes by detaching Malay treachery from the blind unreason of running *amok* while exploiting its discursive currency as a metaphor for vivifying narratives of political ruination. In *Moby-Dick*, the uncommon assertion of Malay subtilty represents a disturbing trait undercutting the intellective supremacy of white western subjectivity and the globalization of human community under its hegemonic auspices. In the second of two chapters entitled “Knights and Squires” (Chapter 27), Ishmael revealingly characterizes the *Pequod’s* white American mates as “Gothic Knight[s] of old,” the dark harpooneers serving them as squires (106). Shortly thereafter, he expands this feudalist dynamic into a larger, organicist schema. In the business of whaling, he explains, the “American liberally provides the brains, [while] the rest of the world as generously suppl[ies] the muscles”

\[^{80}\] For more examples of this usage, see “The Globe and The Navy.” *Commercial Advertiser*, August 8, 1838, 2; “Prospects Improving.” *Weekly Herald*, January 6, 1842, 125; and “The Issue on the Slavery Question.” *Boston Courier*, December 6, 1849, 2. Among these, the last example speaks directly to the prospect of national dissolution. “The South is running a muck,” its author laments, “And would strike down law and constitution with as blind a recklessness as a Malay with his opium and kriss lays about him in a crowd.”
Set against this racialized distribution of labor (in which Queequeg, Tashtego, and Daggoo provide archetypes of tractable racial difference) the gothic Malay appears inhuman precisely because his malicious cunning maligns the integrity of a desired world order.\(^{81}\)

As witnessed in his celebration of the American whaling industry, Melville considers the radical potential of cosmopolitanism to be bound up with the rise of American commercial dominance. In this respect, his futurology responds to a new U.S. political discourse conceptualizing the Pacific as a space of unprecedented world-historical importance. One year after the publication of *Moby-Dick*, an article entitled “Our Empire on the Pacific,” appearing in *The Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review*, provides a useful lens through which to contextualize the confluence of globalization, U.S. exceptionalism, and racializing rhetorics that inform Melville’s work in 1851. In unambiguous terms, “Our Empire” celebrates the advent of a U.S.-controlled Pacific. For the author, the burgeoning “political influence of California” appears “destined to reanimate the slumbering nations of Eastern Asia, which . . . have since reposed in the long night of semi-barbarism, while the day-light of progress has slowly traced its western circuit of the earth” (275).\(^{82}\) A similar set of remarks appears in

\(^{81}\) The notion of globalization under American direction takes hold in later years. At Promontory Point—where the First Transcontinental Railroad was connected in 1869—one witness reported, “Here, near the center of the American Continent, were the united efforts of representatives of the continents of Europe, Asia, and America—America directing and controlling” (Harris 252).

\(^{82}\) While references to the Pacific, U.S. empire, and Asian “slumber” make this article particularly useful for interpreting Melville’s representation of the Pacific, its sentiments are by no means unique to the period. Similar rhetoric appears in the 1849 article “California—Its Position and Prospects,” which proclaims, “The lapse of progress in every respect finds the old Asiatic stock improved into the American race, concentrating upon the Pacific Ocean, preparatory to a return into the bosom of Asia, carrying with them civilization, Christianity, and political science. The western impulse given to the population of Europe by the fierce onslaught of the exiled Tartars, reacts after fifteen centuries upon the country of their origin . . . Succeeding to the long night of the dark ages, which her sons inflicted upon Europe, Asia may now observe breaking in the East the dawn of civilization” (412).
Chapter 111 of *Moby-Dick* (“The Pacific”). Praising the Pacific as the “tide-beating heart of earth,” Ishmael interprets its “midmost” position as a sign of liminal connectivity. “The same waves [that] wash the moles of the new-built California towns, but yesterday planted by the recentest race of men,” he remarks, “lave the faded but still gorgeous skirts of Asiatic lands, older than Abraham” (367). In each case, then, the Pacific registers a site of universal consolidation. As with Ishmael, the author of “Our Empire” views the rise of a new transpacific economy, stewarded by American genius, as opening the door to cosmopolitanism. “That knowledge of the general Humanity,” he explains, “Breaking down the shallow distinctions of race once dividing the whole earth into selfish clans and sects . . . those new truths . . . are to be developed in much swifter expansion on the Pacific” (275). Despite its own considerable investment in cosmopolitan projections of this kind, “*Moby-Dick*’s vision of the Pacific remains haunted by the phantom presence of Malay alterity.

Beneath this ocean’s “gently awful stirrings,” Ishmael detects a “hidden soul,” which itself gives rise to a host of images both spectral and oneiric: “millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams . . . tossing like slumberers in their beds” (367-68). In contrast to “Our Empire on the Pacific,” which forecasts a wave of American development “destined to reanimate the slumbering nations of Eastern Asia,” Melville’s decidedly ambivalent vision celebrates the Pacific, while, at the same time, painting it as a zone of deathly illusion (“Our Empire”). In particular, the two texts take a radically different perspective on the idea of Asian awakening. Against the hopeful opportunism of “Our Empire,” Melville’s image of sleepers in their beds conveys an air of menace due to its direct evocation of Fedallah and the Manilla-men. Prior to their appearance at the first
lowering, their presence is dimly perceived when a minor character, Archy, hears a sound below deck like “sleepers turning over” (166). By representing Malays as agitated sleepers, Melville frames their awakening in terms of an ill-defined, yet somehow catastrophic event. In view of Moby-Dick’s ending, the racially-infused “First Lowering” therefore puns portentously on the occasion it describes, creating a dark allusion to the Pequod’s fate as another “drowned dream” of Pacific aspiration.

From the first lowering to this last, Melville’s Pacific gothic suggests that the Malays—as sleeping phantoms of Asia—pose more of a threat to the futures of global community (economistic, cosmopolitan, or otherwise) than many of his contemporaries believe. Embodying this latent power, Fedallah and the Manilla-men are represented as malignant agents who enable Ahab’s obsession and foster his degeneration from humanity. While Ishmael first diagnoses the Captain’s consuming monomania as a psychological projection of angst or ressentiment, his fixation on the whale is frequently represented in the same gothic terms used to describe Fedallah and the Manilla-men. Notably, his transference of “all the subtle demonisms of life and thought” to the white whale finds a near reflection in the “diabolism of subtilty” attributed to these sailors (156). He also calls himself “demoniac,” while Ishmael dubs his obsession “subtle insanity” (143, 177). At other moments, Melville represents Malay characters as agents provocateurs who stoke the fires of the captain’s obsession. When the Pequod first enters the Straits of Malacca (Chapter 87), for instance, she is attacked by Malay pirates. Even

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83 Ishmael formulates this theory in “Moby Dick” (Chapter 41). He surmises that the whale represents for Ahab “the monomaniacal incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them . . . all that most maddens and torments.” “All evil,” he concludes, “Were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick” (156).
to Ishmael’s ecumenical eye, these “inhuman atheistical devils” appear to be “cheering [Ahab] on with their infernal curses” (299).

Eventually, the relationship between Ahab and Fedallah, his Malay “pilot,” comes to approximate a form of gothic doubling (377). In “The Hat” (Chapter 130), Fedallah appears to Ishmael as the Captain’s “forethrown shadow,” while Ahab manifests the Parsee’s “abandoned substance.” Critically, these characterizations utilize phantasmal imagery to reiterate the threat of an invasive Malay subtility, which, in this instance, fissures the autonomy of the western subject. As Captain and harpooneer stand “fixedly gazing upon each other,” their interpenetrating look recalls another gothic scene of mutual regard (401). In Chapter 50 (“Ahab’s Boat and Crew”), Ishmael describes Fedallah as

such a creature as civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see in their dreams . . . but the like of whom now and then glide among the unchanging Asiatic communities, especially the Oriental isles to the east of the continent—those insulated, immemorial, unalterable countries, which even in these modern days still preserve much of the ghostly aboriginalness of earth’s primal generations, when the memory of the first man was a distinct recollection, and all men his descendants, unknown whence he came, eyed each other as real phantoms. (191)

As in Ishmael’s opposition of the Manilla-men against the “honest white mariners” of the whale fishery, Fedallah is here represented in terms of his spectrality and distance from white civility. At the same time, Melville’s description secures Moby-Dick’s conception of the phantom Malay as a threat to the futures of American hegemony and
cosmopolitanism. Whereas texts like “Our Empire on the Pacific” present triumphalist teleologies of western historical development, the Malay figure bespeaks a premodern conception of time’s cyclicality and the persistence of antagonistic conditions ad infinitum. In view of this temporal subversion, Melville’s phantasmal imagery now charts an intelligible course mediating embattled notions of time, race, and power. Beginning with the formless terror of Starbuck’s “grim phantom futures,” it attains a particular, racializing character—vis-à-vis the “five dusky phantoms”—before arriving at a mystic vision of the asocial, a Malay-haunted world in which men “ey[e] each other as real phantoms.”

This trajectory attains a devastating conclusion in the event of the Pequod’s destruction. On the second day of “The Chase,” Fedallah disappears from Ahab’s boat and is presumed drowned. On the following day, his “half torn” body reappears, strapped to the back of the surfacing whale (423). Moments later, this “down-coming monster” crashes into the ship, a picture of “retribution, swift vengeance, [and] eternal malice” (425). While the high drama of this scene may distract, somewhat, from its racializing message, this critical subtext—meticulously prepared by the novel’s gothic imaginary—must not be neglected. In view of its aesthetic precedent, Moby Dick here emerges as a Malay-ridden missile torpedoing the Pequod’s provisional cosmopolis. The biopolitical implications of such a scene, which visually associates anti-communitarian violence with an exceptional, Malay body, are by now readily apparent. Still, the riveting spectacle of Fedallah’s corpse represents only the most obvious of two Malay signifiers active in this culminating tableau. It is with the more covert of these—the binding Manilla rope—that I wish to conclude.
“The Magical, Sometimes Horrible Whale-line”

When Fedallah’s body reappears, Ishmael lays peculiar stress on the whale-line that envelops it. “Lashed round and round to the fish’s back,” he states, “pinioned in the turns upon turns in which, during the past night, the whale had reeled the involutions of the lines around him, the half torn body of the Parsee was seen” (423). With its preponderance of early subordinate clauses and use of the passive voice, Melville’s syntax emphasizes the torsions of the rope as heavily as the body it binds. Moreover, verbs such as “lashed,” “pinioned,” and “reeled” establish an aesthetic of sinuous violence, the intricacy of which prompts a reconsideration of Ishmael’s earlier treatment of Manilla rope in “The Line” (Chapter 60). By parsing through the shifting aesthetics of this rope in these two moments, I wish to highlight—for a final time—the transformative impact of the Pacific gothic as a literary technology that affixes racialized meaning to select bodies, objects, and spaces.

In the first place, “The Line” establishes what will prove a critical detail vis-à-vis the gothic and its central conception of the Malay’s inhuman “subtilty.” Specifically, it reveals that the whale-lines of the Pequod are manufactured in the Manillas, the very location from which four of Ahab’s “five dusky phantoms” hail. “Manilla rope,” Ishmael observes, “Has in the American fishery almost entirely superseded hemp as a material for whale-lines.” What follows is a paragraph-long encomium to this rope. Critically, Ishmael’s praise of this material extends to an appreciation of the way it looks, a judgment he attributes to there being “an æsthetics in all things.” Manilla rope, he declares, is simply “much more handsome and becoming to the boat.” Having made this claim, however, Ishmael neglects to address a key point of irony—namely, that the
comely presence of Manilla rope should contrast so sharply with the repulsive presence of Manilla-men. He does, however, provide a pair of racializing metaphors that gestures to the rope’s Malay provenance without precisely naming it. “Hemp,” he says, “is a dusky, dark fellow, a sort of Indian; but Manilla is a golden-haired Circassian to behold” (227). Effectively, these metaphors displace the bodies of the rope’s Malay manufacturers—“Indians” to their Spanish colonizers—while attaching the aesthetic value of their handiwork to an idealized white body. While this brazen, racial reassignment works to erase the presence of Malay alterity, its whitening aesthetic proves remarkably short-lived. Just a few paragraphs later, having described the rope’s practical usage, Ishmael places it at the center of a new gothic aesthetic. This shift in perception, I contend, signals the chapter’s overall function in the text, which is to foreshadow the importance of rope in the novel’s concluding scenes.

At the outset of “The Line,” Ishmael states, “With reference to the whaling scene shortly to be described [‘Stubb Kills a Right Whale’], as well as for the better understanding of all similar scenes elsewhere presented, I have here to speak of the magical, sometimes horrible whale-line” (227). While these prefatory remarks designate the chapter as an interpretive key for other parts of the novel, they also suggest the aesthetic mutability of Manilla rope, its duplicitous capacity to both appeal and appall (227). If, as Ishmael later contends, there is “an æsthetics in all things,” his reference to the “magical, sometimes horrible” character of the whale-line intimates that this aesthetics remains highly subject to context. Particularly influential in this regard is the

gravity of literary forms, which, in their mobilization of distinctive vocabularies, tropes, and imagery, frame readerly perception from moment to moment.

Such is the effect of Melville’s Pacific gothic, which periodically intervenes in the structuration of what I call, adapting a concept from Jacques Rancière, the text’s “distribution of the sensible.” As a “system of self-evident facts of sense perception,” a distribution of the sensible “defines what is visible or not in a common space, [and what is] endowed with a common language” (12-13). In “The Line,” Melville shapes the reader’s perception of the titular object, whose features appear self-evident even as they are continuously processed by the literary. Beginning in a detached standpoint of ekphrasis, Ishmael’s discourse soon moves to an interior perspective, within the work of whaling. The effect of this movement is to transform the aesthetic connotations of the whale-line utterly. For a first-time oarsman, Ishmael relates, “involved in [the rope’s] perilous contortions,” this material evokes a “shudder that makes the very marrow in his bones quiver in him like shaken jelly.” Having placed the reader in an oarsman’s shoes, Ishmael moves to a larger statement about life’s precarity. “All men,” he muses, “Live enveloped in whale-lines . . . but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present perils of life” (229). In these lines, which echo Malay treachery in their evocation of “subtle” perils, Ishmael recasts the rope in terms of a bare life aesthetic later revisited in the gothic spectacle of Fedallah’s bound corpse. What Melville restores to the rope, there, is a singular association with Malay alterity. What once appeared as a “golden-haired Circassian” reemerges, in the event of the Pequod’s cosmopolitan shipwreck, as a serpentine agent of malevolent subtilty,
something much closer to Fedallah’s “living hair[,] braided and coiled round and round upon his head” (181).

By concluding with the aesthetic vicissitudes of Manilla rope, which redoubles the impact of an already forceful image, I have sought to illustrate the depth of *Moby-Dick*'s Pacific gothic imaginary and the remarkable consistency of the racializing work it performs. The materiality of the rope, I would add, also allows us to refasten *Moby-Dick* to the Asian-Pacific world of work it both mines and obscures. In 1898, less than fifty years after the novel’s publication (and just seven years following Melville’s death), the United States would officially enter the ranks of the world’s imperialist powers by colonizing the Philippines and annexing Hawai‘i. Attending to the “five dusky phantoms” of *Moby-Dick* grants us new insight into the early development of America’s transpacific designs and racializing discourses, while underscoring the formative role of the literary in their slow-moving elaboration. From the standpoint of our contemporary moment, lately termed “America’s Pacific Century,” this insight may prove especially timely.85

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CHAPTER 3:

Recasting Filibusterism(o): National Romance, Corruptive Cosmopolitanism, and American Intrigue in the Novels of José Rizal

*El combate comienza en la esfera de las ideas.* [Combat begins in the sphere of ideas.]

—José Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887)

*It was written by that beautiful soul José Rizal, whom the Spanish despatched to his last account in pure despair of finding any charge against him, a few years before we bought a controlling interest in their crimes against his country. It would have been interesting to know what we would have done with such a political prisoner . . .*

—William Dean Howells, “Editor’s Easy Chair” (1901)

*And as for a flag for the Philippine Province, it is easily managed. We can have a special one – our States do it: we can have just our usual flag, with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and cross-bones.*

—Mark Twain, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” (1901)

Although Filipino scholars have produced a large body of excellent scholarship on Rizal’s novels, their insights and arguments seldom inform the archives of American literary studies. In the United States the most prominent writer on Rizal was Benedict Anderson, the late political scientist and historian, who often referred to Rizal in discussions of literary nationalism. However, perhaps because Anderson’s work is best known to many through anthologized excerpts of *Imagined Communities* (1983) that highlight the rise of print capitalism in western Europe, Americanists are not well

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86 Two major figures in Rizal scholarship are such Leon Maria Guerrero and Ambeth Ocampo. Guerrero published the prize-winning biography *The First Filipino* (1962). A historian, Ocampo published the widely-cited biographical work *Rizal Without the Overcoat* (1990), a study that explicitly works against Rizal’s conversion into a banal nationalist monument.
acquainted with Anderson’s use of Rizal’s literature as an exemplum. If American treatments of Rizal have been rare, scholarly analysis of Rizal’s work in the context of American imperialism is rarer. Among the few critics who have engaged this context, the most prominent (and the most trenchant) has been E. San Juan, Jr., who has long ascribed to Rizal a “radical orientation” erased by the appropriative efforts of westernizing forces (*The Philippine Temptation* 32). The importance of asserting the doubly anti-imperial character of Rizal’s novels—that is, its repudiation of American, as well as Spanish, forms of imperialism—stems precisely from the sedimentation of these appropriative efforts.

Lack of scholarly attention to Rizal in the United States derives, in part, from his writing in Spanish, but also from American Studies’ continued emphasis on post-1898 literary developments, an emphasis which neglects the *inter-imperial* situation of Philippine coloniality through the mid-twentieth century. In other words, because he wrote before the United States planted its flag, Rizal has escaped the purview of scholarship on U.S. imperialism. Yet, because Rizal was so instrumental to U.S. imperial pedagogy *after* the Philippine-American War ended, I contend, it is critical to devise a different spatial-temporal approach to Rizal’s novels to recover its inter-imperial

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88 I use the term “inter-imperial” here, following Laura Doyle’s definition of “inter-imperiality,” which, she explains, “names a political and historical set of conditions created by the violent histories of plural interacting empires and by interacting persons moving between and against empires” (160).

89 Rizal has figured more prominently in recent histories of American imperialism in the Philippines. Chief among these is Paul Kramer’s *The Blood of Government* (2006).
critique. In this chapter, I offer one such approach. Unlike San Juan Jr., however, I do not argue that Rizal’s repudiation of American imperialism “transcend[s]” his time (15). Instead, I analyze his works’ engagement with cosmopolitanism, the much-contested concept at the heart of a rising U.S. Pacific imminence discourse, and the nineteenth-century history of American filibusterism. As I will explain, Rizal’s cosmopolitan associations as a middle-class *ilustrado* made him particularly susceptible to appropriation by Pacific Imminence discourse in the Progressive Era. Nevertheless, a close reading of his novels illuminates the author’s criticism of the very mode of being with which he is commonly associated. I then examine an overlooked historical context of *El Filibusterismo*, in which Rizal characterizes his antihero Simoun—who is, in fact, the disguised and disillusioned Crisostomo Ibarra, protagonist of the earlier novel—as a devious cosmopolitan with meaningful American connections. To examine these rarely examined connections is to illustrate Rizal’s innovative and proleptic treatment of cosmopolitanism as vehicle of American imperialism.90

I pursue these arguments through three phases. The first section reads the features of the U.S. colonial appropriation of Rizal and its connection to Pacific imminence discourse. Then, I discuss how Rizal was particularly vulnerable to appropriation by this discourse due to his cosmopolitan experience in Europe. In the second section, I demonstrate how, in *Noli Me Tangere*, Rizal produces a frustrated national romance, at variance with the roughly contemporaneous foundational fictions of Latin American, that

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90 An important exception to the general trend is Lifshsey’s “The Literary Alterities of Philippine Nationalism in José Rizal’s *El Filibusterismo*” (2008). However, while Lifshey discusses Simoun’s description as an American, he does not analyze him as evoking a distinctly American form of deterritorialized imperialism, but rather in service of the *Fili* as “a foundational novel of modern globalization” (1435).
warns against the deracinating and corruptive consequences of cosmopolitanism for the Philippines’ burgeoning national consciousness and aspirations for independence. This warning reaches its highest pitch in El Filibusterismo, Rizal’s adaptation of the late-nineteenth-century subgenre known as the dynamite novel. In the final section, I focus on how Rizal’s critique of cosmopolitanism attains inter-imperial significance through its evocation of the history of American filibusterism and an incipient figure of the U.S. agent provocateur at the end of the nineteenth century.


Rizal

U.S. overseas expansion in the late nineteenth century prompted public debate about the principles of American democracy and the moral rectitude of a former British colony taking its own colonial possessions. As Andrew Carnegie asked in the pages of the North American Review, “Is the Republic, the apostle of Triumphant Democracy, of the rule of the people, to abandon her political creed and endeavor to establish in other lands the rule of the foreigner over the people, Triumphant Despotism?” (239). While the U.S. had developed a clear model of settler colonialism in the ideology of manifest destiny, its acquisition of foreign territories in the Pacific and Caribbean would, by the end of the Progressive Era, come to precipitate a newly cosmopolitan lexis and self-understanding.

However, as the Philippine-American War raged during the first years of the twentieth century, it quickly became clear that the United States had no intention of assimilating the Philippines to its own body politic. With no desire to make the
Philippines a future state, imperialists had to appeal to a broader world communal context to advance.\(^91\) As a result, one witnesses a very quick shift from the wartime characterization of Filipinos as threatening and irredeemable “gugus” and “niggers”—representing only a slight variant on the villainous Malay figure found in antebellum periodicals—to the benevolent and fraternal figure of the primitive, yet educable “little brown brother.”\(^92\) By shifting its dominant conception of the Filipino from an inhuman being to a not-quite-human being (returning to Alexander Weheliye’s formulation in the last chapter) now conceptualized in terms of global fraternity, the U.S. colonial regime advertised its commitment to McKinley’s “benevolent assimilation” proclamation in 1898. Although this famous formula is often discussed in terms of evangelical duty, its cosmopolitan connotations are worth emphasizing here. For example, in the wake of Admiral Dewey’s victory over the Spanish at Manila Bay, “religious editors across the nation” professed the sentiment that “‘the American Republic’ was ‘on the way to a larger ministry in world affairs’” (Miller 17).\(^93\) As a pedagogical project of inculcating American culture, benevolent assimilation served the developing discourse of Pacific

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\(^91\) As Allan Punzalan Isaac notes of this period, “The United States . . . sought to circumscribe what was proper to, as opposed to property of, ‘America.’” (2) He formulates the concept of “American Tropics” as a “disciplinary practice” that constitute[s] a set of controlling metaphors or tropes of imperial tutelage and containment that separate the primitive from the civilized, chaos from order, property from the proper” (2).

\(^92\) The tension endemic in this transition is best seen through the perspective of American soldiers, who rejected it. See for example, Robert F. Morrison’s deeply sarcastic poem “The Little Brown Brother” (1903), whose opening stanza runs,

I’m only a common Soldier man, in the blasted Philippines;  
They say I’ve got Brown Brothers here, but I dunno what it means.  
I like the word Fraternity, but still I draw the line;  
He may be a brother of William H. Taft, but he ain’t no friend of mine. (lines 1-4)

\(^93\) The quoted text comes from the *Woman’s Evangel’s* Oct. 18, 1898, p. 161, though Miller takes its sentiment as exemplary of the American Protestant press’s consensus position at the end of 1898. He also notes that President McKinley’s “constituency” depended in large part on “Protestant groups” (17). In his own remarks to a Methodist delegation on 21 November 1898, McKinley claimed to have received a message from God that because they were “unfit for self-government . . . there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them” (22-23).
imminence by preparing Filipinos for cosmopolitan community shaped by American interests. To this end, the cosmopolitan figure of Rizal quickly became an object of imperial knowledge-making.

In 1914, an American named Austin C. Craig published one of the first biographies of José Rizal. Dedicated to “the Philippine Youth” *Lineage, Life, and Labors of José Rizal, Philippine Patriot*, the work remains a commonly used source in Rizal scholarship (v). Nevertheless, few have addressed the work’s remarkable subtitle: *A Study of the Growth of Free Ideas in the Trans-Pacific American Territory*. With this addendum, Craig makes a key rhetorical gesture. While the first part of his title presents his work as a conventional biography, focused on Rizal, his genealogy and personal history; the second part frames the work as a genealogy of ideas with a direct bearing on contemporary geopolitics. This doubling of the text speaks to a general process through which the U.S. imperial administration reconstructed Rizal as a figure reflective of its own political agenda. One of Craig’s most important claims is that Rizal was profoundly shaped by the ideas of Fedor Jagor, a nineteenth-century German naturalist, who allegedly “inspired in him his life purpose of preparing his people for the time when America should come to the Philippines” (129). Hence, through a practice of teleological historicism, Pacific imminence peddlers like Craig worked to frame Rizal as a knowing harbinger of the United States’s rising, transpacific power. The latter became, in this millenarian account, a secular figuration of John, the Baptist. To render Rizal in these terms, Craig frequently misrepresents his attitude towards America by manipulating aspects of his cosmopolitan education.
Yet, although Craig is at pains to draw an endorsement of U.S. imperialism from Rizal’s life and works, the latter’s assessment of American overseas interests directly contradicts these efforts. Craig’s disingenuousness, in this regard, is at times staggering. At one point, he writes, “It seems beyond question that Doctor Rizal, as early as 1876, believed that America would sometime come to the Philippines, and wished to prepare his countrymen for the changed conditions that would then have to be met” (99). It should be borne in mind, here, that Craig intends his work as propaganda for consumption by “the Philippine Youth” to whom his work is dedicated (v). As he wrote in that dedication, “Your public school education gives you the democratic view-point, which the genius of Rizal gave him . . . you have the guidance in the new paths that Rizal struck out, of the life of a hero who, farsightedly or providentially, as you may later decide, was the forerunner to the present régime” (v). As I will make clear in the final section of this essay, such ideas jarringly clash with Rizal’s stated perspective. For the moment, one brief example will suffice to underscore the irony of Craig’s dedication.

In “Filipinas dentro de cien años” [“The Philippines a Century Hence”] (1889-90), his most commonly cited political essay, Rizal does mull the possibility of a U.S. attempt at taking the Philippines after independence from Spain, yet hardly in the approving terms Craig’s work suggests. He writes, “No es imposible, pues el ejemplo es contagioso, la codicia y la ambición son vicios de los fuertes, y Harrison se manifieso algo en este sentido cuando la cuestión de Samoa” [“It is not impossible, since the example is contagious, avarice and ambition are the vices of the strong, and Harrison

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94 While it is notable that his final sentence in the dedication invites students to follow Rizal’s example by “neither accept[ing] anything because it is written, nor reject[ing] it because it does not fall in with your prejudices” and to “study out the truth for [them]selves,” his profound misreadings repeatedly undermine this ethos (v).
manifested some of this sentiment on the question of Samoa”] (40). “The example” to which Rizal refers is the scramble for Africa, while his later comment gestures to American Pacific designs coming to fruition in his own time. However, stating that the Panama Canal was not completed and that it would be blocked by European powers, Rizal concludes that U.S. intervention is unlikely because it would contradict the nation’s political ideals (“contra sus tradciones”) (40). While Rizal’s suspicion of U.S. influence would intensify by the time he published El Filibusterismo in 1891, these earlier speculations in “Filipinas dentro de cien años” already render Craig’s biography problematic.

To cast Rizal as pro-American figure, Craig de-emphasized Rizal’s own comments on America—which, as I will later show, were usually critical—and instead focused on Fedor Jagor’s Travels in the Philippines (1875), a text found in the library of the author’s parents’ home in Calamba.95 It is through Jagor that Craig mobilizes the trademark cosmopolitan vision of Pacific imminence: an event instituting global commercial integration and prosperity. In an extended passage quoted by Craig, Jagor writes, “The world of the ancients was confined to the shores of the Mediterranean; and the Atlantic and Indian Oceans sufficed at one time for our traffic. When first the shores of the Pacific re-echoed with the sounds of active commerce, the trade of the world and the history of the world may be really said to have begun” (qtd. in Craig 97-98). Jagor represents a critical link in the chain Craig hoped to forge between Rizal and the American colonial regime. As I will discuss at the end of the chapter, Rizal’s relationship

95 Craig notes that Rizal, while living in Berlin, later met Jagor, “the author of the book which ten years before had inspired in him his life purpose of preparing his people for the time when America should come to the Philippines” (129).
with the United States—a nation through which he traveled near the end of his short life—was ambivalent, at the best of times, and sharply critical at others. He had been far more attached to countries like Germany and France than he ever was to the United States. Hence, the importance of Jagor’s work was that it allowed Craig to access the United States through Rizal’s German experience. It is Jagor’s words, not Rizal’s, that are used to construct the latter as “America’s Forerunner” (the title of Craig’s first chapter) in the Philippines.

Still, if Craig’s manipulative portrait of Rizal as a harbinger of U.S. colonialism was intent upon constructing a genealogy or “lineage” that would connect him with an Anglo-Saxon tradition culminating in an American “Trans-Pacific” empire, it was enabled by his subject’s cosmopolitan lifestyle, practices, and tastes. While studying in Madrid and Barcelona, Rizal collaborated closely with other expatriate Filipinos, including the essayist Marcel H. del Pilar and the future revolutionary general Antonio Luna, in an association now known as the Propaganda Movement. The primary organ of this community was La Solidaridad, a newspaper, based first in Barcelona and then Madrid, that began publication in February 1889. While overtly committed to an assimilationist message that advocated reforms for the Philippines (most notably, representation in the Spanish Cortes General and the end of press censorship), Schumacher notes that many Propagandists, including Rizal, saw this position as “much more a strategy or a first step” to the long-term goal of independence from Spain (299).

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96 It was in this periodical that Rizal published “Filipinas dentro de cien años” and other numerous articles. 97 Schumacher adds that “the very existence” of the revolutionary organization Katipunan, who rose against Spain in 1896 (300). “Though the leaders of the Propaganda Movement did not plan the Revolution that broke out in 1896,” he explains, “It was their ideas that caused those who did to take fire. Andrés Bonifacio copied out letters written by Rizal and Del Pilar, and built his Katipunan on the foundations of the Liga Filipina, which embodied Rizal’s ideas” (301).
As Paul Kramer notes, *La Solidaridad* was “self-consciously cosmopolitan: while its editorials focused largely on Spanish parliamentary debates on the status of the Philippines, its news columns carried items from the rest of continental Europe, from the United States, and through telegraph relays from the Filipino colony in Hong Kong, from the Philippines itself” (51).

Rizal’s own writings from this period demonstrate an optimistic view of the value of cosmopolitan experience through travel. In an article entitled “Los Viajes” [“Travels”] (1889), he waxed lyrical about this subject, stating, “Es tan innato en el hombre el deseo de viajar como el saber” [“The desire to travel is as innate to man as the desire to learn”] since it allows “nos comuniquemos y fraternicemos los que nos hallamos separados por la distancias, y unidos formemos una sola familia, aspiracion de todos las pensadores” [“those who are separated by distance to communicate and fraternize, who together may form a single family, which is the aspiration of all wise men” (247-48)].

“For this”, he adds, “Ha hecho al hombre cosmopolita” [“Was man made cosmopolitan”] (248, emphasis mine). Despite this cosmopolitan lyricism, however, Rizal was aware of the potential problems facing Philippine natives who spent too much time away from their homeland.

The political perils of self-imposed exile can be traced through the fraught connotations of the term “ilustrado,” an adjective meaning “enlightened,” which became a noun for describing Philippine islanders of the upper-middle-class who received European-style educations at the university level and who, in many cases, spent time living in Europe. However, as Caroline S. Hau points out, “‘Ilustrado’ has been a

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98 This article was originally published in *Diariong Tagalog* in 1882 (the year Rizal left for his first stay in Europe). It was reprinted in *La Solidaridad* (the version quoted here).
notoriously slippery term, often used in conjunction—and sometimes conflated—with a variety of labels ranging from ‘elite,’ ‘cacique,’ and ‘principalia’ to ‘the haves,’ ‘middle class,’ and ‘upper class,’ labels that carry with them associations not only of wealth and social status, but access to power, race and/or ethnicity (with mestizoness as a defining characteristic” (10). As I will illustrate in my reading of his novels, even as Rizal clearly valorized the experience of travel and valued his own education abroad, he felt compelled to underline that too much cosmopolitanism was a bad thing for a colonized people trying to assert itself as a self-sovereign nation.

More specifically, what Rizal’s fiction illustrates is that he understood that the cosmopolitan seductions of the colonial migrant could steer Philippine intellectuals off the path to nation-building. In this regard, he anticipates Pheng Cheah’s critique of hybridity theory, which dominated discussions of postcoloniality and cosmopolitanism throughout the 1990s and much of the 2000s. “As a new internationalism or cosmopolitanism,” Cheah argues, hybridity theory “is feasible only to the extent that it remains confined to metropolitan migrancy and forecloses the necessity of the postcolonial nation-state as a precarious agent that defends against neocolonial global capitalist accumulation” (302). As a polymathic colonial migrant whose mastery of western thinking and practices seems to capture perfectly the mimicry/mockery ambivalence Homi Bhabha famously describes, Rizal nevertheless demonstrated deep concern about the negative consequences of cosmopolitan comparativity.99 As he wrote near the end of his time abroad,

99 See Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (1994).
Si nuestros compatriotas solo esperan de nosotros los que aquí estamos en Europe, se equivocan mucho. . . . Sólo podríamos ayudarles, con nuestras vidas por el bien de nuestro pueblo. Esa general creencia, de que nosotros podríamos ayudar desde estas lejanas tierras, paréceme muy equivocada.

La medicina debe de estar cerca del enfermo. . . . Aquellos cinco meses que he estado allá son un ejemplo vivido, un libro much mejor aún que el Noli me tangere. El campo para la lucha está en Filipinas; es allá donde debemos encontrarnos.

[If our countrymen place hope in us here in Europe, they delude themselves. . . . We can only help them with our lives for the good of our people. The general belief that we can help from these distant lands, seems to me very misguide. The medicine must be brought near the sick man. Those five months that I spent there [between stays in Europe] are a living example, a book much better than Noli Me Tangere. The field of battle is the Philippines; it is there that we should be.] (“Fragmentos” 251)

It was by obscuring Rizal’s turn from cosmopolitanism to nationalism, which, as I will show, characterizes the basic narrative arc of his two novels, that Pacific imminence purveyors like Craig forged an image of Rizal conducive to U.S. imperial ends.

**Corruptive Cosmopolitanism in Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo**

If Rizal was easy to categorize as a cosmopolitan in his life and essays, his account of cosmopolitanism in his novels illustrates a negative take on the cosmopolitan hero’s removal from his society. Why might Rizal have represented cosmopolitanism so
differently in his art? My argument is that, like his contemporary Sun Yat-sen, Rizal recognized that—while desirable as a normative goal of humankind—cosmopolitanism played into the hands of imperial interests. Born in Guangdong Province, China, just five years after Rizal, Sun traveled to Honolulu in 1878 (at age thirteen), where he spent nearly five years studying at the ‘Iolani School and Oahu College. Like Rizal, therefore, Sun’s education was marked by travel and the acquisition of western culture.

Nevertheless, as a politician in later life, Sun was careful to separate cosmopolitanism as an act of personal cultivation from cosmopolitanism as a normative practice in the context of colonial antagonisms.

In a speech from February 1924, Sun argued that cosmopolitanism was being used by imperialist nations to “preserve their privileged position in oppressed countries as well as their supremacy over the world” (26). For Sun, the value of cosmopolitanism depends upon one’s standpoint vis-à-vis geopolitical power relations. “It is evident that unless our country has achieved freedom and independence,” he stated in a later speech, “We are not in the position to preach cosmopolitanism” (33). “True is the saying,” he concluded, that “In order to make the world tranquil and happy, the nation must first be well governed!” (37). For Sun, “wronged nations” such as China and the Philippines, which despite U.S. investment cannot but “demand independence from America and consider their being a dependency of America as a disgrace” (34), cosmopolitanism can only be reached through a dialectical movement whereby nationalism overcomes colonial

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100 In the context of the Propaganda Movement, Rizal’s denigration of cosmopolitanism can be linked to his split with Del Pilar, editor of La Solidaridad. As Schumacher notes, the rift between them concerned “the question of whether anything was to be achieved by propaganda and political activity in Spain” (148). While Del Pilar persisted in this approach until the end of 1895, Rizal returned to the Philippines in 1892 and formed a new organization called La Liga Filipina.
oppression (qtd. in Cheah 30). As I will now illustrate, a reverse movement takes form through the narrative arc of José Rizal’s novels, whereby forms of cosmopolitanism prove either futile or inimical to the related projects of nation-building and political independence.

In the following pages, I examine Rizal’s two novels, Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo—as developing a narrative of corruptive cosmopolitanism. ¹⁰¹ In the Noli, he develops a similar pattern to the national romances of Latin America, but, by adding a third character, Elías, he also explicitly engages with the cosmopolitan problem of ilustrado alienation. In the Fili, Rizal modifies the melodramatic sub-genre of the “Dynamite Novel” to narrate the modulation of Ibarra’s well-meaning, if futile, cosmopolitanism into an inimical vision of excessive violence that, by subordinating the people to individualist resentment, works against their political liberation.

This narrative begins in the Noli with the introduction of Crisostomo Ibarra, the mestizo son of “el más rico capitalista del pueblo” [“The richest capitalist in town”], who returns to his hometown of San Diego after seven years of studying in Germany, Poland, England, Spain, and other western European countries (47). ¹⁰² Filled with liberal reformist dreams, he hopes to marry his childhood sweetheart Maria Clara and open a school. However, upon his arrival he learns that his father, Don Rafael Ibarra, fell afoul of a local Franciscan friar, Father Dámaso, and was wrongfully imprisoned and died in

¹⁰¹ In Philippine literary tradition, the novels are referred to as “the Noli” and “the Fili.” To honor this tradition and for the sake of brevity, I will use this terminology throughout the remainder of the essay.
¹⁰² The racial hierarchy of the Philippines in the nineteenth century was headed by peninsulares (born in Spain), followed by criollos (born in the Philippines), then by Spanish mestizos and Chinese mestizos. The mass of Philippine society was comprised of indigenous, but Catholic indios, while the bottom rung of the ladder was occupied by infieles that included both animist populations of Igorots and Negritos, who primarily resided in the mountainous Cordillera, and the Islamic Moros, mostly located in the southern island of Mindanao. For more detail, see Kramer, The Blood of Government, 39.
As the novels unfold, a series of personal losses drive Ibarra’s plot-line, while other colonial injustices are inflicted on minor characters at other levels of Manila’s social hierarchy.

Partly due to the moment of their publication (the 1880s and ‘90s) and partly to their overt political content, Rizal’s novels are commonly linked to forms of realism, American and Spanish. When *An Eagle Flight* (1900), the suggestively-titled American translation of *Noli Me Tangere*, reached William Dean Howells in 1901, he concluded his review by saying, “It is a great novel, of which the most poignant effect is in a sense of its unimpeachable veracity” (806, emphasis mine). In his capacity as “Dean of American Letters,” Howells’s words would have sounded a powerful invitation to American readers to read Rizal’s work for realism. In a Hispanophone literary context, critics have also linked Rizal’s work to contemporary realist authors, noting, for example, that the novel’s plot bears resemblance to Spanish realist Benito Pérez Galdós’s *Doña Perfecta* (1876).

However, as Alma Jill Dizon rightly points out, reading Rizal’s work as realism misses its deeper engagement with formal traditions of the Latin American romance and French melodrama. This engagement distinguishes Rizal’s work from the practice of Spanish realists of the late nineteenth century, she observes, who “shunned melodrama and pointedly wrote against what they regarded as the false illusions of romance and happy endings. In this way, the tendency to bill Rizal as a Realist stems in part from a dismissal of popular writing by the Realists themselves” (414). This tendency may also derive from Rizal’s dedication of the *Noli* “A mi patria” [“to my country”], in which he

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103 See Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism* (1997) for Howells’s institutional role in valorizing realism through prominent American periodicals such as the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper’s*.

104 For more on this influence, see Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement* (91) and Carlos Quirino, *The Great Malayan*, 75.
writes that he will lift the veil—“levantaré parte del velo”—that obscures its real conditions (11). Reading *Noli Me Tangere* as a romance prompts transpacific comparison of its formal features with the roughly contemporaneous national romances of Latin America. In her landmark study, *Foundational Fictions* (1991), Doris Sommer highlights the way these romances construct allegories establishing mutually constitutive narratives of *eros*—expressed through a driving, heterosexual love plot—and the *polis*—the newly-formed nation-state. These works are “almost inevitably stories of star-crossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, economic interests, and the like. Their passion for conjugal and sexual union spills over to a sentimental readership in a move that hopes to win partisan minds along with hearts” (5). As my earlier synopsis of the *Noli* suggests, Rizal’s narrative resembles this paradigm. However, while it contains many elements of the Latin American national romance, they follow a starkly different trajectory.

If the central characters of the national romance are lovers, what Dizon refers to in the Philippine context as “ilustrado and ingénue,” the *Noli* presents strong candidates in Crisóstomo Ibarra and María Clara (419). Childhood friends whose union has been long-expected, they are, in accordance with Sommer’s criterion, “lovers who know they’re right for each other” (17). This union, which is ultimately denied by social forces (the friars), also entails *mestizaje* (miscegenation), which, Sommer notes, “is practically a

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105 While I agree with Dizon’s comparison of Rizal’s work to these national romances, whose features I discuss below, it is necessary to emphasize, here, that whereas the romances Sommers analyzes were published after independence, Rizal’s were published years before the Katipunan uprising and decades before independence. Nevertheless, like the Latin American national romances, Rizal’s works have become required reading in the Philippines. In 1956, the Philippines instituted Republic Act No. 1425, now commonly known as the “Rizal Law,” which highlights Rizal’s novels as “a constant and inspiring source of patriotism with which the minds of the youth, especially during their formative and decisive years in school should be suffused” (qtd. in Lifshey 1438).
slogan for many projects of national consolidation” (22). While the Ibarra is described as having “un hermoso color moreno”[“handsome brown color”] with “algunas ligeras huellas de la sangre española”[“some light traces of Spanish blood”] (24), María Clara has skin “graciosa de una capa de cebolla y la blancura del algodón”[“as fine as onion skin and as white as cotton”] (48). Although the lovers do not come from different social classes or regions, Rizal makes it abundantly clear that their marriage contains the seeds of a national allegory when, in Chapter 7 (“Idilio en una azotea”[“Idyll on a terrace”]), Ibarra says to María Clara, “se unen en todo tu ser todo lo hermoso y bello que adornan ambas razas, y por esto tu amor y el que profeso a mi Patria se funden en uno solo”[“You unite in your whole being all that is fine and beautiful in both races [the Spanish and the Philippine]; for this, your love and that which I profess for my country have melted into one”] (53). What has yet to be emphasized, however, is that the blocked marriage also mobilizes an allegory of failed cosmopolitan-national union. Critically, Ibarra utters his lines in response to María Clara’s asking if he thought about her often while he was in Europe, and after his response—which, despite his sincerity, represents a species of formal flattery—she states, “Yo no he viajado como tú, no conozco más que tu pueblo, Manila y Antipolo”[“I haven’t traveled like you. I know little more than your village, Manila, and Antipolo”] (49). By characterizing the lovers’ conversation as the meeting of a worldly traveler and a cloistered provincial, Rizal establishes a key aspect of his narrative of failed cosmopolitanism.

Another major difference between the Noli and the Latin American national romances is that it contains a love triangle instead of the “dyad” that Sommer analyzes (17). The third character in this triangle is Elías, an agitator for radical reforms, who
engages Ibarra in dialectical arguments about the merits of gradualism and immediate action. As in the love triangles famously described by Eve Sedgwick, this one involves a homosocial bond.\textsuperscript{106} Elías represents Ibarra’s alter-ego: a man of equal intellectual gifts who does not venture outside his home country and constitutes Rizal’s most highly valorized figure of anti-colonial resistance. Whereas Ibarra’s relationship to María Clara allegorizes the binding of the Filipino nation through the institution of marriage, his relationship to Elías—who, as it turns out, has suffered a history of abuses instigated by Ibarra’s grandfather—is defined by personal reconciliation and political alliance with a member of the indigenous population, known, as in the Latin American colonies, as indios.

In discussions between these two characters, Ibarra’s attempts to bring European solutions to bear on Philippine problems are cast as the doomed efforts of a futile cosmopolitanism. This failure is best understood, I contend, through Rizal’s evocative phrase “el demonio de las comparaciones” [“the devil of comparisons”] (60). In his book of the same title, Benedict Anderson translates the phrase as “the spectre of comparisons” and defines the phrase as articulating “a new, restless double-consciousness which made it impossible ever after to experience Berlin [where the Noli was published] without at once thinking of Manila, or Manila without thinking of Berlin” (\textit{Spectre} 229). For Anderson, who adopts Rizal’s formula for broader analysis, the words evoke a fraught dialectic of nationalism, “which lives by making comparisons” (229). In \textit{Noli Me Tangere}, however, “el demonio de las comparaciones” registers as a hindrance to the emergence of the Filipino nation by stymying its fruition with a conciliatory form of

gradualism. After two important dialogues, however, Elías draws Ibarra to the understanding that his cosmopolitanism has driven a wedge between him and his oppressed countrymen. By the end of the novel, Ibarra—who has been framed for organizing an uprising by Father Dámaso and Father Salvi—sheds this demonic comparativity and pledges himself to the cause of popular revolt.

The first of these discussions occurs in Chapter 49: “La voz de los perseguidos” [“The Voice of the Persecuted”], Rizal illustrates Ibarra’s dependence on cosmopolitan experience and “el demonio de las comparaciones.” The chapter narrates a conversation between the two characters. Prior to this meeting, Elías has made a deal with a bandit, currently in hiding, to sound out Ibarra on his political position and persuade him to use connections in Madrid to propose “reformas radicales” [“radical reforms”] to the Cortes General (317). His hope is that Ibarra will respond positively and that violence can be avoided. If he is unsuccessful in convincing Ibarra, Elías pledges his allegiance to the bandit, who has been planning an uprising as retribution for a litany of abuses he has personally suffered. One of the reforms Elías insists upon concerns the “terrorismo” [“terrorism”] of the Guardia Civil (319). While Ibarra calls the Guardia Civil “un mal necesario” [“a necessary evil”], Elías’s argument is that because “la sociedad sólo puede ser severa con los individuos, cuando les has suministrado los medios necesarios para su perfectibilidad moral” [“society can only be severe with individuals when it has provided the necessary means for their moral perfectability”] and because “no forman una unidad el pueblo y el Gobierno” [“the people and the government are not united”] (317). After hearing this argument and others, Ibarra signals his deep confusion, “algún error existe aquí que se me escapa ahora, algún error en la teoría que deshace la practica, pues en
España, en la Madre Patria, este cuerpo presta y ha prestado muy grandes utilidades”
[“There is some error here that escapes me, some error in your theory that undermines what happens in practice, since in Spain, the mother country, this body provides, and has provided, great utility”] (320). While Ibarra here invokes “el demonio de las comparaciones,” looking to Spain for his logic, Elías quickly counters that “nuestras costumbres, nuestro modo de ser, que siempre se invoca cuando se nos quiere negar un derecho, se olvidan totalmente cuando algo se nos quiere imponer” [“our customs, our way of life, these are always invoked when they want to deny us some right, but these are totally forgotten when they wish to impose something on us”] (320). Ibarra’s response is to hang his head and state, academically, “Esta cuestión, amigo mío, necesita un serio estudio” [“This question, my friend, requires serious study”] (320). He tells Elías that he will look into the issue and, if he decides there is truth in the matter, he will write to his friends in Madrid.

As the talk continues, however, Ibarra retreats to his former position of gradualism, saying, “aquí menos que en otra parte veo la necesidad de las reformas” [“here less than anywhere do I see the need for reforms”] (322). Given the abuses he has suffered from Dámaso at this point in the novel, Ibarra’s position is remarkably self-denying and it leaves Elías exasperated. Shortly after this exchange, Elías tells Ibarra that further discussion is futile, since Ibarra cannot take seriously his position as an indio. He says, “Si bien he tenido alguna educación, soy un indio, mi existencia para vos es dudosa” [“Although I have had some education, I am an indio. To you, my very existence is doubtful”] (323). If “el demonio de las comparaciones” afflicts Ibarra as a cosmopolitan double-consciousness, Elías here reveals its implication with an unequal
colonial divide. Because his opponents are Spanish, he explains, Ibarra will always look upon his ideas as “suspect” [“sospechos[a]”] (323). Hurt by Elías’s accusation, Ibarra admits he has been plunged into “doubt” [“dud[a]”] and states, “No me he educado en medio del pueblo, cuyas necesidades desconozco tal vez; he pasado mi niñez en el colegio de los jesuitas, he crecido en Europa, me han formado en los libros y he leído sólo lo que los hombres han podido traer a la luz . . .” [“I was not educated among the people, whose needs I perhaps do not know; I spent my childhood in the Jesuit school, I grew up in Europe, books have formed me and I have read only what their authors have brought to light’”] (322). However, after listening to Elías tell him about his hard life, which, in its own narrative of social ruination casts light on a different demon of comparisons—one that inspires an ineluctable sense of injustice.

By the end of this account, however, Ibarra is personally moved but politically unconvinced, calling Elías’s vision of a reformed society “imposible” and “utópico” [“impossible” and “utopian”] (329). He refuses Elías’s enjoinment to take up “la causa del pueblo” [“the cause of the people”], saying, unequivocally, “Yo nunca el que he de guiar a la multitud a conseguir por a fuerza lo que el Gobierno no cree oportuno” [“I will never be the one to lead a multitude to obtain by force what the government does not deem opportune’”] (329). It is critical to note, here, that while the talk is ostensibly about reforms, the discussion between the two men also broaches the question of armed revolt (“conseguir por a fuerza”). Specifically, it is not Elías who names this eventuality, but Ibarra who reads it, as though between the lines of their debate. Finally, Elías asks Ibarra what he should tell the people who have sent him (the bandit and his men). Ibarra replies that he will not use his Spanish connections to agitate for the reforms. The people must
“esperen” [“wait”] because “los males no se curan con otros males y en nuestra desgracia todos tenemos nuestras culpas” [“evils cannot be cured with other evils and we all share culpability for our unhappiness”] (330). With Ibarra unpersuaded, Elías communicates to a messenger that he is ready to join the bandit’s cause.

Yet, by the end of the novel it is Elías, who, while helping the fugitive Ibarra escape Manila, strives to convince his friend against taking violent action. This change in affairs derives from Ibarra’s new status as a fugitive from the law, but also in response to Elías’s confronting him with the reality of his cosmopolitan separation from the Philippine people. Rejecting Ibarra’s offer to bring him to Europe, Elías says, “en otra parte podéis ser feliz y yo no, porque no estáis hecho para sufrir, y porque aborreceríais vuestro país, si un día os vieseis por causa suya desgraciado: y aborrecer a su patria es la mayor desventura” [“you can be happy elsewhere, I can’t, because you’re not made for suffering, and because you’ll come to abhor your country if one day you view it as the cause of your suffering: and to abhor one’s country is the greatest of misfortunes”] (394). Elías tells Ibarra that he does not want to criticize him, but to make him understand that he views his surroundings through a glass, darkly: “Yo quiero desenganaros, señor, y evitaros un triste porvenir” [“I want to remove your illusions, senor, and help you avoid a sad future”] (395). Elías’s words cut Ibarra to the bone, provoking his most impassioned burst of patriot rhetoric:

Tenéis razón, Elías, pero el hombre es un animal de circunstancias . . .

Ahora la desgracia me ha arrancado la venda . . . Ahora veo el horrible cáncer que roe a esta Sociedad, que se agarra a sus carnes y que pide una
violenta extirpación. ¡Ellos me han abierto los ojos, me han hecho ver la
llaga y me fuerzan a ser criminal!

[You’re right, Elías, but man is a creature of circumstance . . . Now
disgrace has torn off the blindfold . . . Now I see the horrible cancer
gnawing at this society, rotting its flesh, asking for a violent extirpation.
They opened my eyes, they made me see the sores and forced me to
become a criminal!] (395)

In this key scene, Elías’s phrase “yo quiero desengaños”—artfully translated by Harold
Augenbraum as “I want to lift the scales from your eyes”—combined with Ibarra’s “la
desgracia ha arrancado la venda” [“disgrace has torn off the blindfold”]—resonates with
an oft-forgotten signification of the novel’s title: noli me tangere (400). Words spoken by
Jesus to Mary Magdalene that, as a title, suggests the taboo nature of Rizal’s unfiltered
social commentary, “noli me tangere” is also an obscure name for a form of skin
cancer.¹⁰⁷ Rizal, a trained and practicing ophthalmologist, may well have encountered
this disease, which often afflicts “the Eye-lids, Nose, Great Angle of the Eye, and its
neighbouring Parts,” or have read about it in his studies (Daviel qtd. in Marmelzat
188).¹⁰⁸ In the novel’s dedication “A mi patria” [“To my country”], Rizal speaks of lifting
the veil on the problems of his country—“Levantaré parte del velo que encubre el mal,
sacrificando a la verdad todo” [“I will lift part of the veil that covers evil, sacrificing
everything to truth”] to reveal a “social cancer” [“un cancer social”] (11). By linking
these opening remarks with the climactic escape scene in Chapter 61: La caza en el lago

¹⁰⁷ The phrase appears in the Gospel of John 20:17.
¹⁰⁸ For history on the treatment of “noli-me-tangere” in an ophthalmological context, see Willard
Marmelzat’s “Daviel on the ‘Noli-me-tangere’: A Lost Chapter in the History of Cutaneous Cancer of the
Face” (1949).
[“The Pursuit on the Lake”], we can read the concept of “social cancer” as applying to both objective conditions of social injustice and flawed methods of understanding them. To do so is to de-emphasize the novel as a realist text and accentuate its engagement with national romance, a form which works to diminish cosmopolitan distance rather than instill it, while casting further light on Ibarra’s failure to understand the constraints of his cosmopolitan perspective.\(^\text{109}\)

Reaching an emotional peak, Ibarra states, “Seré filibustero, pero verdadero filibustero; llamaré a todos los desgraciados, a todos los que dentro del pecho sienten latir un corazón, a esos que os enviaban a mí . . . no, no seré criminal, nunca lo es el que lucha por su patria, al contrario!” [“I will be a filibustero, but a true filibustero. I will call on all the down-trodden people, everyone who feels a heart beating in his chest, those who sent you to me . . . No, I won’t be a criminal, you aren’t a criminal when you fight for your country, just the opposite!” (395). While Augenbraum’s recent Penguin translation of the novels renders the word “filibuster” as “subversive,” I argue that the word should not be translated, as its connotations of filibusterism—understood as piracy, writ large, and as American mercenary activity in the nineteenth century—are critical to appreciating the irony that Ibarra’s words quickly accrue in *El Filibusterismo*.\(^\text{110}\) Over Elías’s protestations that “¡el pueblo inocente sufrirá!” [“innocent people will suffer!”], he maintains his commitment thusly: “le haré ver su miseria; que no piense en hermanos; ¡sólo hay lobos que se devoran, y les diré que contra esa opresión se levanta y protesta el eterno derecho del hombre para conquistar su libertad!” “[I will make them see their

\(^\text{109}\) I draw my understanding of realism as productive of literary cosmopolitanism from Tom Lutz’s *Cosmopolitan Vistas* (2004), a text with which I engage more extensively in the next chapter.

misery, not to think of brotherhood, only the wolves that devour them, and tell them to rise against this oppression and proclaim the eternal right of man to conquer his liberty!”] (397). At the end of the chapter, Elías dives into the water to distract the Guardia Civil, sacrificing himself so that Ibarra can escape. By killing off his native hero in the Noli, Rizal sets the stage for his sequel’s anguished exploration of a dialectic of private revenge and public revolt. In the Fili, Ibarra’s pledge of allegiance loses its inchoate social vision of liberation, which becomes engulfed in the shadowy hands of Simoun, Ibarra’s newly adopted identity, who bodies forth a different, inimical form of cosmopolitan distance that, as I will show in the final section of this chapter, Rizal subtly links to the history of American filibusterism.

In the book’s opening scene, Simoun is engaged in conversation on the deck of the Tabo, the “ship of state” I examined in relation to the USS Rizal in the introduction. Known to the crowd as a mysterious jeweler who has traveled to Manila with the new Captain General, he is described as having a striking appearance, being tall and thin and having completely white hair. He also wears “constantemente enormes anteojos azules de rejilla, que ocultaban por complete sus ojos y parte de sus mejillas” [“constantly enormous blue sunglasses of wicker, which completely covered his eyes and part of his cheeks”] (5). Standing out from the crowd in this way, he immediately appears as an outsider whose suspiciousness is only overlooked because of his enormous wealth. Right from the beginning, his recommendations to the other passengers mark him as an agent provocateur, working to stir up violence between the people and their colonial masters. He tells them to employ harsh measures of convict and conscripted labor, eliciting
shocked responses from his audience, who tell him these practices would cause an uprising.

On the lower deck of the ship are two important characters: Basilio, the son of Sisa, a poor *indio* woman who is driven insane by her cruel employer, Doña Consolación, in the *Noli*, and Isagani, a young *indio* poet. Isagani and Basilio can be read as generational reincarnations of the young Ibarra, insofar as they want to build a school for the teaching of Castilian. Simoun’s recognition is demonstrated through his discomforting stares, which annoy Isagani and leave Basilio terrified. By the end of the novel, Basilio will have joined Simoun’s cause and Isagani will have foiled its final effort. Critically, therefore, Rizal’s characterization of these two young characters, each of whom pursues a marriage doomed by colonial circumstance, subsumes the national romance’s centripetal trope of personal-political desire under a revenge narrative indebted—as I will soon discuss—to the formal features of the late-nineteenth-century dynamite novel.

To achieve his ends, Simoun appeals to various characters’ desire for revenge against the religious orders and government: characters such as Cabesang Tales, a peasant farmer dispossessed of his land, and, following the death of his beloved Juli—who kills herself rather than give herself to a lascivious priest, a disillusioned Basilio. Simoun makes two failed attempts. While plotting the first, he experiences a moment of hesitation, wondering, “si él, Simoun, no era parte también de la basura de la maldita ciudad, acaso el ferment más deleteréo” [“if he, Simoun, was not also a part of the trash of the damned city, if not its most deleterious ferment”] (150). He is then revisited by visions of “mil sangrientos, sombras desesperadas de hombres asesinados, mujeres
deshonradas, padres arrancados a sus familias,” [“thousands of bloody specters, desperate shadows of murdered men, dishonored women, fathers ripped from their families”] which restore him to his quest for vengeance (150). Haunted by Elías’s words of warning at the end of the *Noli*, he exclaims, “¡Nada de idealismos, nada de falaces teorías! Fuego y acero al cancer, castigo al vicio, ¡y rómpase después si es malo el instrumento! . . . si he hecho el mal es con el fin de hacer el bien y el fin salva los medios” [“No more idealism! No more false theories! Fire and steel against the cancer, punishment for vice, and afterwards, if it is evil, break the instrument! . . . If I have done evil it is with the aim of doing good and the ends will justify the means”] (151). Such reasoning, Rizal ultimately suggests, descends from the cosmopolitan detachment bred during Simoun’s thirteen-year absence from the people he claims to offer liberation.

When Basilio learns that Simoun is in fact Ibarra, early in the novel, Simoun asks him to join his cause, but Basilio refuses. As part of his argument against revolutionary violence, Basilio—a medical student—champions the idea of cosmopolitanism, associating it with scientific advancement and the promise of futurity. Telling Simoun that he prefers to stay within the bounds of his profession and help people using science, he asserts that patriotism—the most commonly-used word for “country” is “patria”—will one day be obsolete:

Dentro de algunos siglos cuando la humanidad esté ilustrado y redimida, cuando no haya razas, cuando todos los pueblos sean libres, cuando no haya tiranos ni esclavos, colonias ni metrópolis, cuando rija una justicia y el hombre sea ciudadano del mundo, la palabra patrióticas le encerrarán
In reply, Simoun states that the removal of colonialist oppression and the establishment of a nation are necessary precursors to such a vision. “Sí, sí” [“Yes, yes”],” he states, “Mas, para que llegue ese estado es menester que no haya pueblos tiranos ni pueblos esclavos” [“But to bring about this situation, there must no longer be slaves nor oppressed peoples”] (58). Here, Simoun’s reply anticipates Sun Yat-sen’s assertion, made more than thirty years later, that wronged nations have no business preaching cosmopolitanism. At the same time, however, through the ironic, dialectical opposition of an optimistic, native scholar preaching cosmopolitanism to a pessimistic, cosmopolitan agent provocateur, Rizal narrativizes a central tension between his own commitment to education—like Basilio, he “deplore[s] that he would never be permitted to open a school in his own country” (Schumacher 231)—and a simultaneous unwillingness “to owe the tranquility of the Philippines to anyone except the forces of the country itself” (Rizal qtd. in Schumacher 175).

As the Fili progresses, however, it soon becomes clear that although Simoun advocates the cause of inspiring revolution through violent means, Rizal undermines this logic by revealing his character’s confusion of personal revenge with political struggle.
Revealingly, he tells Basilio, “¡Hago la revolución porque solo una revolución podrá abrirme las puertas de los conventos!” [“I have created this revolution because only a revolution can open the doors of the convents for me!”] (207). Upon learning of María Clara’s death, immediately after this admission, he becomes distraught and retreats to the mountains, abandoning his first effort at rebellion.

As Simoun prepares for his second attempt at revolt, it becomes clear that María Clara’s death has only intensified his pursuit of personal revenge, an act broaching genocidal proportions and conducted for the people in name only. When the uprising begins, he tells Basilio, the rebels must “pasará a cuchillo no solo a la contrarevolución, ¡sino a todos los varones que se nieguen a seguir con las armas!” [“put to the knife not only the counterrevolutionary, but every male that refuses to bear arms and follow us”] (249). Killing off any who do not support the cause, he reasons, will give rise to a purer society. He says they must “renovar la raza” [“renew the race”] because “¡Importa destruir lo malo, matar al dragon para bañar en su sangre al pueblo Nuevo y hacerle robusto e invulnerable!” [“It is imperative to destroy the evil, slay the dragon so as to bathe a new people in its blood and make it robust and invulnerable!”] (249). Rizal makes clear his disapproval of such reasoning when the narrator characterizes Simoun’s words as powerful, yet “sangrientos sofismas” [“bloody sophisms”] (250). Having regained his composure, Simoun reveals a plot to blow up a house at which he will throw a wedding feast for Paulita Gomez—who has rejected her former suitor, Isagani, because of his rising reputation as a reformist—and the complacent Spanish mestizo Juanito Palaez. This wedding reception will be attended by all the powerful friars, including the
villainous Father Salví, who was instrumental in framing Ibarra and, by pursuing Maria Clara, drove her into the convent and hastened her untimely death.

Although Rizal wrote in Spanish, a linguistic choice that alienated him from most Philippine readers, the forms in which he chose to write—romance, melodrama, were popular ones. In *El Filibusterismo*, Rizal’s interest in popular forms led him to a sub-genre of melodramatic fiction known as “the dynamite novel,” which flourished in England during the 1880s and ‘90s. He may have come across some of these novels during his stay in London in 1888-89, where he spent time at the British Library annotating, and ultimately publishing, a new edition of Antonio Morga’s *Sucesos de las islas Filipinas* (1609). Citing examples ranging from the attempted assassination of the German Emperor in 1883 to the 1886 Haymarket affair and the assassination of U.S. President William McKinley in 1901, Sara Cole notes, “The last two decades of the nineteenth century might well be called the era of anarchism,” and a newly-emergent figure of the anarchist bomber became prevalent in melodramatic novels of the period.

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111 From late 1891 through the middle of 1892 Rizal lived in Hong Kong, where, as Schumacher notes, he was “at work, with the help of his brother Paciano . . . on a translation of the *Noli* into Tagalog” (270). This work was never completed, but the effort signals Rizal’s intention to reach a broader Filipino readership. On the related questions of vernacular language and accessibility, it is also worth noting that the Latin American romances, analyzed by Sommer as consensus-building efforts at national consolidation, were mostly written for readers who were “privileged by definition” since “mass education” had not yet been implemented in the young postcolonial nations (15). Hence, while it is true that Rizal’s works would not have been read contemporaneously by Filipinos who spoke only Tagalog and other indigenous languages (most of the population), it is also true that most Latin Americans, who were Spanish-speaking but illiterate or semi-literate, were not likely to have read Sommers’s “foundational fictions” in the mid- and late-nineteenth centuries. For more on Rizal’s use of Spanish and the modern history of language in the Philippines, see Juan E. de Castro, “¿En qué idioma escribe Ud.? : Spanish, Tagalog, and Identity in José Rizal’s *Noli me tangere*” (2011) and Vicente L. Rafael, “Translation and Revenge: Castilian and the Origins of Nationalism in the Philippines” (1999).  

112 The term “dynamite novel” is coined by Sara Cole, whose article, “Dynamite Violence and Literary Culture” (2009), I refer in the following pages.  

113 For more on this project, see Ambeth R. Ocampo, “Rizal’s Morga and Views of Philippine History” (1998).
While in London, Rizal may have read or heard about “attempts to blow up London Bridge (1884), Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament (1885)”

It is also possible that he may have heard of texts such as Johann Most’s *Revolutionary War Science* (1885), which gave instructions in bomb-making and promoted the concept of “propaganda by deed.”

While Simoun’s character does not promote an explicitly theorized anarchist politics, his vision of “mata[ndo] al dragon para bañar en su sangre al pueblo Nuevo y hacerle robusto e invulnerable” [“slay[ing] the dragon so as to bathe a new people in its blood and make it robust and invulnerable”] resonates closely with a contemporaneous ethos of anarchist violence. “Anarchists often invoked a rhetoric of purity and fertility in destruction,” Cole explains, “As [Mikhail] Bakunin wrote, ‘Revolution requires extensive and widespread destruction, a fecund and renovating destruction, since in this

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114 My definition of “melodrama” follows Peter Brooks’s formulation in *The Melodramatic Imagination* (1976). In this comparative Francophone-Anglophone study, he states that despite the term’s widespread application, “there is a form, calling itself melodrama, that comes into existence near the start of the nineteenth century, and that this form itself is vital to the modern imagination” (xi). He states that late nineteenth century forms of novelistic melodrama derive from an earlier tradition of “classic French melodrama” developed “in the aftermath of the French Revolution” and “endured, with modifications and complications, into the 1860s, to be relayed, eventually, by the cinema and then by television” (xii). Such a tradition links authors like Balzac, “who began by writing penny dreadfuls” and “successful serialists [such] as Alexandre Dumas and Eugène Sue” (x).

115 The failed attempt to bomb Greenwich Observatory in 1894 inspired Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* (1907) perhaps the most famous dynamite novel. Other examples of dynamite novels include *A Modern Dedalus* (1886), *For Maimie’s Sake: A Tale of Love and Dynamite* (1886), and *Dynamiter* (1887).

116 Although he clearly intervenes in the literary tradition of the dynamite novel, Rizal’s relationship to anarchism is harder to discern. The strongest link between Rizal and European anarchism is the Catalan politician Francisco Pi y Margall, who served as president of the short-lived First Spanish Republic of 1873 and translated the works of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon into Spanish. Austin Coates observes, Pi y Margall “knew Rizal personally and had a high opinion of him” (171), while Manuel Sarkisyanz notes that they had “a close friendship” (qtd. in Aseniero 144). In a recent article, George Aseniero speculates that during Rizal’s stays in Spain he may have read from Pi y Margall’s personal library, which would have contained many works by Proudhon and “certainly would have given him a vital introduction to socialist discourse” (145). E. San Juan Jr. asserts that Rizal “knew the Russian Nihilist movement and probably Proudhon and Bakunin, and indirectly Marx and Engels, given the contentious ambience of anarchists, syndicalists, and utopian socialists saturating Paris, London, Burssels, Berlin, Vienna, and other cities he visited from 1886 to 1887, and later from 1888 to 1892” (“Sisa” 53). Nevertheless, Rizal’s own writings and the text of his novels do not suggest a deep reading of anarchist or socialist theories.
way and only in this way are new worlds born’” (306). Simoun also resembles the anarchist bomber insofar as “anarchists in the British imagination were always understood as foreign . . . for anarchism was not a British-born phenomenon and was fundamentally international in spirit” (310). Anarchist meetings often brought together individuals of various ethnic and national backgrounds, exhibiting a cosmopolitanism to which Rizal gravitates in the *Fili*.

Simoun reveals his bomb plot in Chapter 33, “La Última Razon” [“The Final Arbiter”]. Leading Basilio into his laboratory, he produces a large lamp shaped like a pomegranate. He then removes a flask from a nearby cupboard and presents its label to Basilio, who, as a man of science, soon makes sense of the chemical formula written there. “¡Nitro-glicerina! [“Nitroglycerin!”], he exclaims, “retrocediendo y reitrando instintivamente las manos--. ¡Nitro-glicerina! ¡Dinamita!” [“Retreating and instinctively pulling away his hands. ‘Nitroglycerine! Dynamite!’”] (247). Such presentation accords with the melodramatic style Rizal digested from works like Dumas’s 1844 work *The Count of Monte Cristo* (whose plot also informs the *Fili*), while heavily accentuating his engagement with a literary subgenre linked to dynamite, still a relatively new substance in Rizal’s time, being patented by Alfred Nobel in 1867.117 Heightening this melodrama, Simoun imbues his destructive chemical with poetic meaning, saying, “¡Es algo más que nitro-glicerina! ¡Son lágrimas concentradas, odios comprimidos, injusticias y agravios! Es la suprema razón del débil, fuerza contra fuerza, violencia contra violencia . . . ¡Esta noche oirá Filipinas el estallido, que convertirá en escombros el informe monumento

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117 Rizal himself alludes to the novel. In Chapter 22, a theater-goer, noticing Simoun’s absence from a play, remarks “¡Se las está echando de Monte-Cristo!” [“He’s pretending to be the Count of Monte-Cristo!”] (179).
cuya podredumbre he apurado!” [“It is more than nitroglycerine, it’s tears concentrated, compressed hatred, injustices and offenses! It is the final arbiter of weakness, force against force, violence against violence . . . Tonight the Philippines will hear an explosion that will convert into ruins the infamous monument whose putrefaction I have hastened!”] (282). By utilizing melodramatic style, which Peter Brooks has associated with representational “excess,” Rizal underscores Simoun’s revenge as projective revanchism, an affect fueled by reading political mandate into the chemical formula of self-satisfaction (ix).

Despite this framing, it would be wrong to read Rizal’s take on the dynamite novel as apolitical. As Cole argues, “the overlapping of the generic qualities of melodrama with representations of anarchists and dynamite reveals a paradox in the literary imagining of political violence: politics all but disappears, leaving behind an aporia, which is quickly filled by the ready-at-hand genre of melodrama” (304). Writing in a colonial context, however, Rizal does not eschew politics in his rewriting of the dynamite novel. Instead, he takes seriously the notion of spectacular violence conducted by an individual as an engine of popular revolt, while ultimately portraying this measure as damaging to the emergence of national community. Intriguingly, when Rizal was imprisoned prior to his execution in 1896, he hid his final literary work, the poem “Mi Ultimo Adios” in a lamp given to his sister. Hence, if Simoun’s final political act involves the hiding of a bomb in a lamp, Rizal ended his own career by restating his philosophical conviction that “el combate comienza en la esfera de las ideas” [“combat begins in the sphere of ideas”] (Noli 329). What Rizal extracts from the dynamite novel, I
contend, is its melodramatic representation of excess and—as importantly—its cosmopolitan anarchist figure, not its tendency to shift away from politics.

Although some dynamite novels did advance radical political agendas, Rizal’s constitutes a warning about the distancing effects of cosmopolitanism.\(^\text{118}\) It is crucial to note that Rizal refers to Ibarra as Simoun throughout the novel, emphasizing that a subjective transition has occurred beneath the simple change in outward appearances. Importantly, Rizal conceived the _Fili_ as a work that would induce his countrymen “to think correctly” (qtd. in Ocampo 187). Given this context, it becomes clear that while Rizal may invite the reader to sympathize with Ibarra’s sufferings, he does not condone Simoun’s destructive plot, which he does not ground in any clear theory of political liberation. Nevertheless, continuing debate about the push-pull relationship of radicalism and reformism in both of Rizal’s novels is intensified by the fact that Rizal breaks with melodramatic tradition by portraying Ibarra/Simoun as a morally ambiguous character. As Brooks points out, a key feature of melodrama is moral Manicheism. “Good and evil can be named as persons are named,” he explains, “And melodramas in fact tend to move toward a clear nomination of the moral universe” (17). As if acknowledging the likelihood of his readers’ moral indecision, he therefore has the character of Father Florentino, a sympathetic priest (in contrast to the many unsympathetic ones in Rizal’s works), issue a final moralizing statement regarding the linked issues of revolt and the development of national consciousness.

\(^{118}\) For a reading of how early twentieth-century English/American author Frank Harris represents a sympathetic account of anarchist politics in the 1920 dynamite novel _The Bomb_, see John Funchion’s _Novel Nostalgias_ (2015).
When the bomb plot fails—Isagani, learning about the lamp and wanting to save his former sweetheart, Paulita, rushes into the house and throws the device into the Pasig—Simoun goes into hiding. Poisoning himself, he lays dying in Father Florentino’s seaside home, where he tells his life story to the old cleric, asking him why God, if he exists, has not shown him favor in his attempts to bring justice to the world. Florentino replies,

Señor Simoun, mientras nuestro pueblo no esté preparado, mientras vaya a la lucha engañado o empujado, sin clara conciencia de lo que ha de hacer, fracasarán las más sabias tentativas y más vale que fracasen, porque ¿a qué entregar al novio la esposa si no la ama bastante, si no está dispuesto a morir por ella?

[Señor Simoun, while our country is not ready, if it is pushed into the fight or enters under false pretenses, without a clear consciousness of what must be done, even the wisest attempts will fail, and so much the better if they do fail, because why give a groom a wife whom he doesn’t love adequately, for whom he is not ready to die?] (326)

While the final reference to groom and bride suggests a frustrated foundational fiction on the pattern of the Latin American national romance, Florentino’s words are especially remarkable for their consistency with Rizal’s so-called *Manifiesto á Algunos Filipinos* (1896). As Benedict Anderson notes, this text—issued on the eve of his trial for sedition—represents “the last political text he wrote” (161). In that *Manifiesto*, Rizal entreated, “Paisanos: He dado pruebas como el que más de querer libertades para nuestro país, y sigo queriéndolas. Pero yo ponía como premisa la educación del pueblo para que
por medio de la instrucción y del trabajo tuviese personalidad propia y se hiciese digno de las mismas” [Countrymen: I have given proofs, as much as anyone, of my desire for liberties for our country, and I continue to desire them. But I have established as a premise the education of the people so that, by means of instruction and work, they would retain their own personality and make themselves worthy of those liberties”] (qtd. in Anderson 162). Without preparation of the population, Rizal maintained to his death, violent revolt would not produce a better society.

What Pacific Imminence purveyors like Austin Craig erased from this political position, in their eagerness to install the United States as the noble inheritor of Rizal’s pedagogical mission, was its underlying conviction that preparation for national self-sovereignty should be conducted by Filipinos for Filipinos—that a cosmopolitan tutelage would only play into further colonization of mind and body. However, if Rizal’s denigration of cosmopolitanism in his novels evidences the essential irony of his appropriation by American imperialist interests during the early twentieth century, the fact that he repeatedly associates Simoun with American identity, I will contend in the next and final section, underscores an additional—and heretofore, unexamined—layer of irony in the novel’s title: the resonance of “el filibusterismo” with the American history of filibusterism in China and Latin America.

“¡Es un plan yankee!”: American Filibusterism as an Overlooked Context for El Filibusterismo

119 Ironically, despite the text’s plainspoken opposition to the Katipunan uprising, it was still suppressed by the Spanish because “it could in the future inspire the spirit of rebellion” (de la Peña qtd. in Anderson 163).
Simoun is associated with the United States from the moment of his introduction, when, intervening in an argument about straightening river Pasig, he proposes the creation of a canal to bypass the normal route (149). The assembled group of passengers, including Father Salví and the journalist Ben Zayb, listen intently as he describes his idea: “hacer un Nuevo río canalizado y cerrar el antiguo Pásig. ¡Se economiza terreno, se acortan las comunicaciones, se impide la formación de bancos!” [“Make a new canal and cut of the old Pasig. You save space, shorten travel time, and impede the formation of sandbars”] (16). To this Ben Zayb, by way of flattery, responds, “¡Es un plan yankee!” [“That’s a Yankee plan!”], before the narrator notes, “El joyera había estado mucho tiempo en la América del Norte” [“The jeweler had spent a long time in North America”] (17). He then argues that the work can be completed by using convicts and increasing mandatory labor conscription to periods of up to five months. Zayb’s identification of Simoun as an American establishes a recurring practice of appellation. Later in the novel he is referred to by the Manila elites as “un mulato americano” [“an American mulatto”] (18) and, even more viciously racialized terms, “un grosero mulato Americano” [“disgusting American mulatto”] (79). However, Zayb’s specific reference to a “yankee plan” also merits attention for its anticipation of the engineer/mercenary hero of

120 As Lifshey points out, Rizal uses the word “yankee” in its English spelling, rather than the Spanish “yanqui” (1439).
121 One issue I take with Lifshey’s analysis is that he reads Simoun as a creole, rather than a mestizo. He notes that the term “filipino,” at the time of Rizal’s writing, would have signified creoles, “people of Spanish descent born in the Philippines—i.e., those who in Latin America would be considered ‘Creoles’” (1436). He goes onto say that “all the filipino characters who populate [El Filibusterismo] and Noli me tangere, or the Noli, are Creoles and not the lineal descendants of the peoples encountered by Magellan. As a result, one could argue that literally as well as symbolically, the filipinos of the Fili are not even Asian (1436). He then says Simoun is revealed to be “a fourth-generation Filipino (i.e., a Creole)” (1440). In other words, in his reading of the novel, Simoun is a non-Asian character. However, Rizal makes clear that Ibarra, who is biologically the same person as Simoun, is not a creole—that is, “blessed with bilineal Spanish ancestry but corrupted by their colonial births” (Kramer 39)—but a mestizo with “algunas ligeras huellas de la sangre española” [“some light traces of Spanish blood”] (Noli 24).
late-nineteenth-century the U.S. imperial romance and the construction of the Panama Canal (completed in 1914, the year of Craig’s book).

If, as I argued in the previous section, Rizal portrays Simoun as a figure of corruptive cosmopolitanism, he overlays this cosmopolitanism with distinct American signifiers gesturing to the United States’ rising transpacific influence. With the Pasig canal project, Simoun demonstrates expertise in engineering that provides a key to understanding Rizal’s proleptic practice of geopolitical palimpsest. The second half of the nineteenth century, during which the United States speedily industrialized, also saw the formation of the American Society of Civil Engineers (1852), the American Institute of Mining Engineers (1871), and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (1880). Yet in Rizal’s travel diary of 1888, written while he crossed the United States on the way to England, we find the unusual situation of a Filipino ilustrado providing engineering commentary on the American landscape of Ogden, Utah, through which he passes in a Pullman train car. In his May 8th entry, Rizal offers something like a negative image of the opening scene from *El Filibusterismo*. “I believe,” he writes, “That with irrigation and a good system of canals these fields can be rendered fertile” (148). By having Simoun express a more ambitious and coercive plan at the start of his 1891 novel, Rizal gestures to the emergence of a globalist, technocratic Americanism.

In his analysis of the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915, Bill Brown articulates this incarnation of American imperialism as an “internationalist nationalism” linked to the construction of the Panama Canal (149). The Exposition’s official historian, Frank Morton Todd, characterized the canal, of which a $500,000-replica was displayed for visitors, as “the gift of the United States to the world,
America’s contribution to world harmony.” In the same document, however, he admitted that “our primary purpose in building the Canal was not commercial but military: to make sure that no battleship of ours would ever have to sail around South America” (qtd. in Brown 149). As Brown adroitly notices, the U.S. “internationalist nationalism” he describes “should be recognized as a significant break from the ‘manifest destiny’ that ‘propelled’ the United States to California: for the country is now said to serve, and to embody the will of, something like the world” (149). However, while Brown analyzes this rupture as emergent in the 1910s without an explicit link to the Pacific, I view it as part of the longer-developing discourse of Pacific Imminence. As I will argue in the remaining pages, Simoun’s proleptic synthesis of American engineering (and scientific) know-how, mercenary self-interest, and cosmopolitan self-cultivation intimates that Rizal had come to discern, by 1891, the faint, but sharpening insignia of Pacific Imminence in a rapidly globalizing world.

With his engineering skills and knowledge of chemicals, Simoun suggests one figure of the American imperialist-as-technocrat. At the same time, his pursuit of personal vengeance and recourse to excessive violence links him to the figure of the American filibuster. This double association is key, as it links the idea of America as a builder of cosmopolitan futurity to its long history of extra-judicial military interventions throughout the world. In her reading of Richard Harding Davis’s imperial romance *Soldiers of Fortune* (1897), Amy Kaplan observes a synthesizing exemplum of these future- and past-directed Americanisms. As she explains, Davis’s hero, Clay, “divides the work months of the year between construction (as engineer) and destruction (as mercenary) in the outposts of the European empires, and then takes his vacation in
Vienna, where he goes to imbibe high civilization” (105). Combining the strenuous life (through engineering and soldiering) with cosmopolitan sophistication, Clay represents for Kaplan “the ideal American man [of this period] by virtue of his homelessness” (105). A malleable figure suited to changing times, Clay nonetheless descends from the historical tradition of the American filibusters, who, during the antebellum period, were particularly active in Central America. If the globe-trotting Clay has a home, Kaplan states, it manifests through “his sentimental attachment . . . to the grave of his filibustering father” (105).

The figure of the filibuster can be considered as a link between the settler colonialism of manifest destiny and the globalist imperialism of Pacific Imminence. While American filibusters were most active in the antebellum years, their escapades were revisited, discussed, and celebrated in articles and books of the 1880s and ‘90s, when questions of American expansionism once again entered the public sphere. As described in James Jeffrey Roche’s *The Story of the Filibusters* (1891)—published in the same year as Rizal’s *El Filibusterismo*—the term filibuster “was long current in the Spanish as ‘filibustero’ before it became adopted into the English. So adopted, it has been used to describe a type of adventurer who occupied a curious place in American history during the decade from 1850 to 1860” (2). While both concepts share a connection to the history of piracy, which Roche outlines at the beginning of his history, the Philippines of Rizal’s time explicitly linked the term to political subversion. Nevertheless, for a polyglot writer as interested in wordplay as Rizal (see my discussion of “noli me tangere” above), the ironic intersections of these differently, but relatedly signifying terms would no doubt have occurred.
Looking back at the antebellum filibusters, Roche gives his definition: “The citizen or subject of any country, who makes war upon a state with which his own is at peace, with intent to overrun and occupy it, not merely for piratical ends of rapine and plunder, is a filibuster in the true sense of the term” (1-2). He also adds that “such act of war is, by the law of nations, a crime against both countries. Its morality, before the meaner court of popular judgment, will rest upon the measure of its success alone” (2). What Roche’s retrospective categorization makes clear, then, is that while the American filibusters had been acknowledged outlaws, their military successes lent them popular appeal. “The greatest of modern filibusters,” according to Roche, was William Walker (40). Born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee, Walker studied medicine in Scotland before pursuing a career in journalism in San Francisco. It was there that he developed an interest in filibustering and led campaigns to conquer new territories in Mexico for the creation of new slave states. In the late 1850s, he undertook his most ambitious project: establishing and ruling a colony in Nicaragua between 1856 and 1857. The significance of Nicaragua to Pacific trade was immense, given that an overland route in this country afforded one of the few means of transporting goods from the Caribbean to the Pacific. Initially supporting the nation’s Democratic Party against the conservative Legitimists, Walker eventually seized Granada, then the capital, and assumed control over the country. In 1856, his government was recognized by U.S. President Franklin Pierce.

While Walker represents the most famous of the antebellum filibusters, one of his former associates, Frederick Townsend Ward, would carry their tradition of informal, imperialist intervention across the Pacific to southern China, where, in the early 1860s, he led mercenary armies against the Taiping rebels that included large numbers of “Lascars
and Malays from Manilla” (Ferris 388). Battling the latter’s peasant forces at the service of the Qing Dynasty—a foreign ruling class from Manchuria—and exploitative western powers that included Britain and France, Ward provides an early and suggestive example of American interventionism working against forms of popular struggle in the context of inter-imperial, transpacific history. As a filibuster serving such interests, he prefigures American CIA interventions of the twentieth century, which, operating by subtler means, worked to put down popular movements in countries such as Iran, Guatemala, and Chile. Ironically, Austin Craig’s Americanizing account of Rizal in *Lineage, Life, and Labors* itself calls attention to Ward, suggesting that Rizal, along with other “Filipinos,” might have gained a favorable impression of America through his heroic exploits and equanimity towards the Philippine soldiers he led. As this quoted material provides a glimpse of American imperialism’s pedagogical project in the Philippines—once again, Craig’s book is dedicated and addressed “To the Philippine Youth”—I reproduce a large section of it below. Craig writes,

> Americans, too had become known in the Philippines through a soldier of fortune who had helped out the Chinese government in suppressing the rebellion in the neighborhood of Shanghai. 'General' F. T. Ward, from Massachusetts, organized an army of deserters from European ships, but their lack of discipline made them undesirable soldiers, and so he disbanded the force. He then gathered a regiment of Manila men, as the Filipinos usually found as quartermasters on all ships sailing the East were

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122 As historian Robert P. Weller points out, Sun Yat-sen would later characterize the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64) as “a crucial precursor to his own nationalist, anti-Manchu (and thus anti-Qing dynasty) ideology” (732).
then called. With the aid of some other Americans these troops were disciplined and drilled into such efficiency that the men came to have the title among the Chinese of the 'Ever-Victorious' army, because of the almost unbroken series of successes which they had experienced. (84-85)

With this anecdote about Ward, Craig creates an ancestral model for the American colonial situation in which he writes. Assisted by “other Americans,” Ward’s “regiment of Manila men” were “disciplined and drilled” into an “‘Ever-Victorious’ Army.” If the analogy Craig draws, here, were not plain enough, he follows it with a creatively drawn contrast. Unlike the respect and praise Ward reputedly gave his men, Spanish officers heaped perennial abuse upon their Philippine conscripts. In the face of such ingratitude, Craig writes, “the Filipinos . . . consoled themselves with remembering the flattering comments of ‘General’ Ward” (85).

As important, in the above passage, is the fact that Craig never actually uses the term “filibuster” in his account of Ward, opting instead for “soldier of fortune,” a phrase lacking the Hispanophone connotations of subversion which an early-twentieth-century Filipino public would have been sure to notice. In doing so, he works to insulate Ward from accusations of mercenary self-interest, making a move that was by no means unprecedented. In a commemorating article for the (suggestively titled) *Cosmopolitan* in August 1889 (three months after Rizal left New York for London), G. T. Ferris lamented that “English hero worship” of Ward’s successor in China—Charles George Gordon—had resulted in Ward’s being “stigmatized as merely a savage and greedy filibusterer, who fought for his own hand” (388). 123 On the contrary, Ferris writes, Ward “helped to

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123 For another laudatory portrait of Ward, see the article “An American Hero” for the *Christian Union* of 8 May 1884.
save” China “from anarchy,” leading an army he “raised, disciplined, and inspired” against the Taiping Emperor Hong Xiuquan’s “great hordes of tatterdemalions” drawn from “all the floating scoundrelism” of the country (388). If, in applying a similarly altruistic sheen, Craig studiously avoided the appellation of “filibuster,” Rizal’s ironic narration of its concept repeatedly invokes America as a signifier of moral duplicity.

Given Rizal’s characterization of Simoun as an agent provocateur and dynamite bomber, his secondary associations of this morally-corrupt cosmopolitan with Americanism affords a highly critical indictment of the United States as a country of inconsistent political principles. Arriving in San Francisco in late April 1889, he and his companions witnessed the effects of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) first-hand when their ship was quarantined for a week because of its 642 Chinese passengers. Ostensibly, the quarantine was intended to observe passengers for smallpox, but as Rizal wrote to his parents, “The true reason is that, as America is against Chinese immigration and now they are campaigning for the elections, the government, in order to get the vote of the people, must appear to be strict with the Chinese, and we suffer. On board there is not one sick person” (Reminiscences 293). The experience of quarantine colored Rizal’s entire experience of the United States. In a letter to his friend Mariano Ponce, he wrote, “Undoubtedly America is a great country, but it still has many defects. There is no real civil liberty” (303).

These criticisms of the United States are completely absent from Craig’s work and, in some instances, his misrepresentation of Rizal’s meaning is simply astounding. While under quarantine, Rizal wrote the following in his diary: “They say we shall be quarantined. The little customs launch came to visit us. They have unloaded the silk
cargo: Each bale costs about $700. They are not afraid of the silk and of the lunch” (147). The irony of these terse sentences underscore how the political expediency of Chinese Exclusion coincided with a lucrative Open Door Policy towards Chinese trade. In Craig’s book for Filipino students, the same episode reads, “At San Francisco the boat was held for some time in quarantine because of sickness aboard, and Rizal was impressed by the fact that the valuable cargo of silk was not delayed but was quickly transferred to the shore” (142). I emphasize Craig’s egregious mistranslation not only to accentuate the overarching ruse of Pacific Imminence, but to underscore the very point Rizal was trying to make about America in El Filibusterismo: that its principles so often fail to coincide with its practice.

In the letter to Mariano Ponce, Rizal elaborated his critique of America by highlighting anti-miscegenation and exclusion laws. “In some states,” he wrote, “The Negro cannot marry a white woman, nor a Negress a white man. Because of the hatred of the Chinese, other Asians, like the Japanese, being confused with them, are likewise disliked by the ignorant Americans” (303). In the Fili, Rizal incorporates his frustrations with American duplicity through several passing references to the nation’s racial discontents. When the group on the deck of the Tabo discusses Simoun’s oppressive measures, one says, “Ese señor, como es Americano, se cree sin duda que estamos tratando con los Pieles Rojas . . . ¡Obligar, forzar a la gente . . .!” [“That gentleman, just like an American, undoubtedly believes that we are dealing with redskins here . . . Mandate! Force the people!”] (19). In this moment, the nervousness of the Manila criollos, peninsulares, and other elites not only illustrates the dramatic irony of Simoun’s

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124 For a classic image of this paradox, see the political cartoon “The Anti-Chinese Wall” in Puck Magazine (29 March 1882).
attempts to provoke revolt among the indios, but also makes a transpacific gesture of critique, likening Simoun’s vision of violent race purification—revealed later in the novel—to the genocide of Native Americans.

Another reference to racist violence in America occurs when, overcome by Simoun’s “sangrientos sofismas” [“bloody sophisms”], Basilio asks, “¡Qué dirá el mundo, a la vista de tanta carnicería?” [“What will the world say, at the sight of such carnage?”] (250). Simoun replies with a litany of examples of western brutality against colonized peoples, including a reference to North America, “con su libertad egoísta, su ley de Lynch, sus engaños políticos” [“with its egotistic liberties, its lynch law, and its political delusions”] (250). This moment emblematizes one of the key difficulties of interpreting Rizal’s novels. Despite his resolution of the Fili with a pronouncement against accelerationist violence, Rizal’s decision to portray Simoun passionately invoking unpunished acts of colonialist violence as the justification for his anti-colonial insurgency deconstructs universal morality in a manner that clearly encouraged revolutionary violence in his own time (i.e. the Katipunan uprising). What has gone unappreciated, however, is that Rizal’s subtle association of Simoun’s corrupt cosmopolitanism also castigates an ascendant American hypocrisy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to illustrate that a close reading of Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo reveals Rizal’s profound critique of cosmopolitanism as a dangerous pitfall for a developing Philippine national consciousness. By coming to a better understanding of this critique, I have argued, we can read Rizal’s work as actively
working against the misleading cosmopolitanism trumpeted by Pacific Imminence
discourse, instantiated by the work of Craig, and better appreciate the inter-imperial
scope of Rizal’s literary and political visions. Likewise, by recovering the lost context of
American filibusterism from *El Filibusterismo*—a novel that maintains the critique of
cosmopolitanism begun in the *Noli*, but which nevertheless draws upon a range of literary
traditions and political perspectives from around the world— we can begin considering
Rizal’s literary achievement more centrally in our development of more innovative
transpacific and hemispheric approaches to American Studies.
Because much of the discourse of cosmopolitanism is based in the simple but not simplistic idea of how to live better together, it requires that we ask the question that precedes it, of why we do not live well together in the first instance.

—Rinaldo Walcott, 2015

In this chapter, I read Sui Sin Far’s short stories about mixed-race “Eurasian” characters as regionalist texts that disrupt a contemporary American discourse of cosmopolitanism linked to the Pacific Ocean. This brand of cosmopolitanism, which I have referred to as Pacific imminence, attained its most expressive form during the Progressive Era, emerging in such venues such as the Pan-Pacific Movement’s Hawai‘i-based Mid-Pacific Magazine and, later on, the San Francisco-based Overland Monthly.

While Americanist scholars have recently characterized regionalist writing as pioneering a still-influential model of “literary cosmopolitanism,” which combines an “ethos of inclusiveness” with “an evaluative habit of cosmopolitan sophistication,” I contend that Far’s stories focused on mixed-race characters exceed this model of literature, narrating cosmopolitanism not merely as the telos of a project of self-cultivation but as the embodied, yet culturally refused inheritance of mixed-raced Asian Americans during the era of Chinese Exclusion (Lutz 20).

I open this argument by comparing an article from the Overland Monthly entitled “the Pan-Pacific Idea” (1925)—a late, but revelatory example of Pacific imminence discourse—to Sui Sin Far’s much-discussed autobiographical essay “Leaves from the
Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian” (1909). This discussion frames my subsequent contentions by establishing key contrasts between the two main archives I examine. I then analyze editorials from Mid-Pacific Magazine, illustrating how it engages a rhetorical sleight I term microcosmopolitanism—a practice that constructs the regional space of the Hawaiian Islands as a microcosm of harmonious Pan-Pacific unity. I conclude this section by illustrating how this sustained rhetorical project elides the deep investment of certain Pan-Pacific advocates—most notably Jack London—in the racist discourse of yellow peril and its related assertions of white supremacy. In the final section, I engage Far’s works through a reading practice I call transpacific regionalism, which draws on network theory to conceptualize her mixed-race narratives as “connecting link[s]” not only between Western and Eastern cultures, but also between the Pan-Pacific Movement’s overrepresentation of cosmopolitan harmony and suppressed, exclusionary spaces such as San Francisco’s Chinatown (Far 125). While Far’s work does not engage the Pan-Pacific Movement by name, her work directly intervenes in its imaginative “problem-space,” David Scott’s term for “an ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs” (4). Hence, if Pacific imminence offered cosmopolitan answers to the question of what twentieth-century Pacific futurity would look like, Sui Sin Far’s work probed the unequal premises of the transpacific community that was actually coming into being.
Discrepant Hybridities: “The Pan-Pacific Idea” and Sui Sin Far’s “Connecting Link”

Written by the minor poet Robert Louis Burgess, “The Pan-Pacific Idea” appeared in the December 1925 issue of the Overland Monthly. A mature example of Pacific Imminence, this essay illustrates the discourse’s unique amalgam of geographical specificity, temporal urgency, economic opportunism, and cosmopolitan optimism. While emphasizing America’s west coast as a region predisposed to developing Pan-Pacific interests, Burgess maintains the importance of the Pacific to the rest of the world. “The Pan-Pacific Idea is not,” he declares, “Merely a device for entertaining the intellect. It is very definitely linked up with the Foreign Trade Idea” (440). Foreign interest matters to all Americans, Burgess explains, not just “importers and exporters,” “bankers,” and “big financial interests” (440). Here he quotes E. W. Wilson, president of the Foreign Trade Club and Pacific National Bank in San Francisco, who maintains that all Americans “are vitally concerned with foreign trade . . . because upon it we must lean for the profitable distribution of our surplus productions” (qtd. in Burgess 440). As John Eperjesi notes in his account of the development of an American Pacific imaginary, post-bellum Americans increasingly viewed the problem of overproduction as the primary cause of economic crises. Eperjesi links this etiology to the rise of an American Orientalism that conceptualized the Asia-Pacific as a distinct region associated with limitless economic potential. What Burgess’s essay illustrates, however, is that the rhetoric of Pacific

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125 Short verse from Burgess can be found in various magazines of the period.
126 As he explains, “Before [the Recession of] 1873, monetary policy was thought to be the key to understanding economic crisis. Discussions of economy tended to focus on the amount of money in circulation, and on what kind of standard should be used to back it up: gold, silver, or a combination of the two. In the 1870s, a new way of defining economic crisis began to enter the picture: overproduction” (57).
Imminence served to implant a cosmopolitan ethos into this budding global imperialism, which had been in slow development since at least the 1840s.

Burgess’s next item of concern is “the Political Idea” (440). The rise of a new Pan-Pacific economic community, he argues, manifests a global concern comprising “complex problems” that must be considered in “connection with European politics” (440). “In order to understand . . . our neighbor Siam across this duck pond of the Pacific” he explains, “We must apply ourselves still more rigorously to our ancient task of understanding France and England, which, by the way, are immediate colonial neighbors of Siam” (440). At the same time, Burgess maintains that America’s Pacific future would depend on domestic accord—particularly in the Midwest and the South. “In order to understand our own Hawaii and the Philippines,” he states, “We must better understand the politics of Idaho and Arkansas, whose political leaders share with us the responsibility of these Pacific territories” (440). Hence, in Burgess’s reading, Pan-Pacific cooperation is, in fact, a global concern. Having addressed these “practical” considerations, Burgess—a poet—goes on to represent art as a key resource for developing a Pan-Pacific consciousness. Art, in his view, builds the relationships that foster cross-cultural love. In a key passage, Burgess demonstrates—with some revelatory awkwardness—how purveyors of Pacific imminence discourse worked hard to sublimate American imperial desire through an ethos of cosmopolitanism.

To learn to love! There is an enterprise indeed. The old boundaries between countries and races were crossed for the first time by the Marco Polos, Columbuses, Captain Cooks, and Commodore Perrys, and have

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127 At the time, Siam bordered British colonies to the North (Burma) and South (Malaya) and French Indochina to the East.
since been crossed a thousand times at every point. The only thing that remains now is to cross them a hundred thousand times, and then a million times, that each race and nation may first learn to understand and then to love all the other races and nations on earth. (440)

Burgess’s representation of love as “enterprise” is here instructive, as it subtly entwines the commercial interest of Pacific imminence discourse with the political goal of cosmopolitanism. Linked to four white European explorers, it establishes a genealogy that positions America—through the figure of Commodore Matthew Perry—as the natural inheritor of western imperialism. Combined with these references to Eros and colonial history is the act of “crossing,” which, as I will later illustrate, reflects the Pan-Pacific Movement’s persistent marketing of Hawai‘i as the so-called “crossroads of the Pacific” (Ford “Editorial Comment,” Jan 1911, 93). Having established the premises of cosmopolitan futurity in imperial acts of cartography, Burgess returns to the role of art in developing mutual love and respect among all the “races and nations on earth” (440).

Art is one of the great modes of love. The artist learns to love something and labors to show us that something as it appears to his eyes and heart. Then others learn to love that thing which he has made, and are thus introduced to the secret of his inmost heart and thought. The Idea of Art, then, is one which with its growth will do much to bring about a better understanding of the souls of all men and women and children in the civilizations which have developed in all the lands washed by the Pacific. (440)
By defining art as a “mode” of love, Burgess implicitly characterizes literature (the art with which he is most directly engaged) as a cultural technology for fostering a cosmopolitan conception of the world. In his account, the artist represents a privileged figure whose special aptitude for “learn[ing] to love” places him on the frontlines of the charm offensive I have been calling Pacific imminence.

Yet even as “The Pan-Pacific Idea” enthusiastically endorses the rhetorical-ideological project of Pacific imminence, it contains aporias that illustrate the difficulties this discursive construct worked to overcome. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the final phase of the essay, which, having traversed and triangulated “the Foreign Trade Idea,” “the Political Idea,” and “the Idea of Art,” concludes with a rumination on a final component: “the Religious Idea” (440). The most overtly Orientalist section of Burgess’s piece, it concerns a “curious story” picked up “in a small town near the coast of California” (440). In the story, a young American man’s journey to India leads to a spiritual identity crisis. Returning to California, he sits for hours “cross-legged in the manner of an Eastern sage, staring out upon the Pacific” (440). “The dream of Hindu philosophy,” Burgess explains, “Paralyzed his mind and soul without bringing to him the consolation it affords to men to whom this philosophy is native” (440). In this account, western form (the body) balks at eastern content (the mind). Hence, amid Burgess’s enthusiasm for the prospects of a “Pan-Pacific” community, then, he remains noticeably anxious to retain the boundaries of racial difference. Imbibing a philosophy alien to his race, the young man suffers a condition that resembles shell-shock: “He would not eat enough. He scarcely walked or talked at all . . . He did not achieve spiritual repose nor yet physical repose. He had lost the European and American zest for work and play, but had
retained the nervousness and restlessness of which they seem to be the natural expression. He was a spiritual hybrid” (440). Hybridity, here, proves annihiliating to western identity and, despite all the talk of crossings, constitutes a step beyond the parameters of Pan-Pacific thinking. To escape this contradiction, Burgess quickly pivots back to the image of quiet meditation:

This stricken young man was truly pioneering in what is the greatest practical, intellectual, and spiritual adventure of our time here on the Pacific Coast. He was doing his bit toward bringing the Far West and the Far East together. We all need to sit, crosslegged but restless, on the shore of the Pacific and stare out speculatively upon its waters, that we may think and dream a little on all that it means for the future development of our civilization. (440)

What one finds at the end of “the Pan-Pacific Idea,” then, is a rather astonishing act of non-sequitur. By no means endorsing the anguished model of “spiritual hybrid[ity]” he has just described, Burgess concludes his piece by advocating something much closer to an organized yoga session on the beach. In so doing, he makes a critical revelation about Pacific imminence discourse. This is the fact that it rarely, if ever, represents its cosmopolitanism as a project of multiracial integration. Instead, it advocates for spectacles of cultural appropriation and postures of distanced admiration. It is not surprising, therefore, that for all his talk of crossing the “old boundaries between countries and races,” Burgess should refrain from criticizing racist U.S. immigration laws—such as the Chinese Exclusion Act or the Johnson Immigration Act.
Sixteen years earlier, mixed-race Chinese-North American writer Sui Sin Far (also known as Edith Maude Eaton) published a markedly different account of hybridity in *The Independent*. Entitled “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian” (1909), this text has become a key biographical source on Far, a writer who has become increasingly well-known in American literary studies over the past three decades. Even so, scholars rarely, if ever, connect its central topic—the question of biraciality and Far’s refusal of the racial passing practiced by her numerous siblings—in view of contemporary discourses of cosmopolitanism. In the essay, Far articulates her self-conception as “Eurasian”—an identity she dissociates from nationalism, stating, “I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any” (230). Yet Far also describes herself as a vulnerable, fugitive-like figure, troubled psychologically and weakened physically in ways that recall, albeit from a great distance, Burgess’s transpacific traveler in “The Pan-Pacific Idea.” After describing several instances of childhood bullying through a series of flashbacks, Far attests to deep confusion, stating, “I do not understand myself,” and comments on her lack of physical strength—a distressing condition she associates with hypersensitivity. “I have no organic disease,” she writes, “but the strength of my feelings seems to take from me the strength of my body. I am prostrated at times with attacks of nervous sickness” (221). Like the young man in Burgess’s essay, Far’s condition entails “nervous[ness].”

A doctor tells her that her heart is “unusually large,” though Far pointedly attributes her suffering to the psychosomatic burden of being biracial in a deeply racist society: “I know,” she writes, “that the cross of the Eurasian bore too heavily upon my childish shoulders” (221). By utilizing the image of the cross, Far intimates the
importance of Christianity in her life but also associates herself with the persecuted figure of Christ. Later in the essay, she speaks of a childhood desire for martyrdom, of wanting to die for the oppressed Chinese of America, though she later states that she has outgrown this desire. While commentators have highlighted this passage as a way of understanding Far’s reconfiguration of sentimentalism in her work, few have considered how she uses the figure of the biracial body as a figure to problematize cosmopolitanism in a Progressive Era characterized by mixed messages about race. In this sense, Far’s suggestive use of the word “cross” has been overlooked. While its initial sense is one of burden, it also evokes the notion of crossing—a key concept in Burgess’s account of fostering Pan-Pacific love—and the idea of racial mixture. Comparing Far’s text with Burgess’s reveals that the discourse of Pacific imminence, while overtly celebrating the project of cosmopolitanism, trades in spectacles of cross-racial cooperation while studiously avoiding the prospect of a mixed-race community of humankind. In Far’s stories of mixed-race characters, however, it is the foreclosure of precisely this communal possibility that underscores a recurrent narrative of cosmopolitan tragedy.

In a key passage that is usually left out of readings of “Leaves,” Far refers to the prospect of a cosmopolitan future. “Only when the whole world becomes as one family will human beings be able to see clearly and hear distinctly. I believe that some day a great part of the world will be Eurasian. I cheer myself with the thought that I am but a pioneer. A pioneer should glory in suffering” (223-24). As evidenced in Senator William

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128 Far recalls a childhood dream related to this fantasy. “I glory in the idea,” she relates, “of dying at the stake and a great genie arising from the flames and declaring to those who have scorned us: ‘Behold, how great and glorious and noble are the Chinese people!’” (222).

129 For a contemporary use of this word, see Langston Hughes’s poem “Cross” from his 1926 collection *The Weary Blues.*
Henry Seward’s reference to the “human family” in 1852, the notion of cosmopolitanism as recovery of a lost familial love, rather than a love that must be constructed from scratch, is by no means alien to the discourse of Pacific imminence (6). Yet Far’s account of the cosmopolitan incorporates aesthetic and racial components. Moreover, by asserting her belief that the cosmopolitanism of a future age would also dispense with the stigma of miscegenation (“some day a great part of the world will be Eurasian”) renders Far’s account unusual for her time.\(^\text{130}\) As in Burgess’s essay, Far lays claim to the honorific figure of the pioneer. Yet, whereas Burgess moves anxiously to smooth over the painful effects of harboring cross-cultural sympathies, Far embraces suffering as part of the necessary work of realizing a cosmopolitan future.

This is a hopeful moment in Far’s oeuvre, a futurological statement that, characteristically, projects a mixed-race cosmopolitan community beyond her lifetime. As her short stories on mixed-race characters makes clear, however, Far’s assessment was that in a time of racial exclusion, the Eurasian—while serving as a harbinger of a less prejudiced future—must either die or pledge her racial allegiance to one race or another. In her early work, Far represents the former choice, drawing on the established trope of the tragic mulatto. In her later work, however, she depicts her protagonist making a defiant choice to align herself with Chinese culture. That Far’s personal choice was to affirm and publicize her Chineseness, even though it seems she could have passed for a

\(^{130}\) A near contemporary to express similar views is Pauline Hopkins, who, in “Talma Gordon” (1900), addresses the question of miscegenation—or, as her characters term it, “amalgamation” (3). The story opens with a group of prominent white Bostonians, assembled at the house of a Dr. William Thornton, discussing interracial marriage as a potential consequence of U.S. expansion. While most of his guests express “prejudices” against it (3), Thornton theorizes that such intermarriage is inevitable, “through the law of heredity which makes us all one common family” (4). “So it will be,” he adds, “With us in our reformation of this old Republic” (4). At the end of the story, Thornton reveals that he has married Talma Gordon, a woman of mixed black and white ancestry.
white woman, reflects this defiance. As scholars have pointed out, this decision distinguishes her from her sister, Winnifred Eaton. Eaton, who adopted the pen name Onoto Watanna, passed as Japanese (less often the target of racist abuse in this period), and achieved fame with her Orientalist novel *A Japanese Nightingale* (1900).

By contrast, Far explicitly eschewed such self-Orientalizing tactics. Near the end of “Leaves,” she recounts that people have told her “to ‘trade’ upon my nationality” and wear “Chinese costume.” “Instead of making myself familiar with the Chinese-Americans around me,” they tell her, “I should discourse on my spirit acquaintance with Chinese ancestors” (230). Far’s rejection of Orientalism has been addressed by numerous critics, yet it is important to re-establish, here, that her decision is two-fold. On the one hand, she embraces Chineseness as a minor identity in an American society built on institutional racism. On the other, she refuses to stage this identity in commodified terms. For example, Far almost never utilizes dialect, a key feature of most local color writing, in a deliberate attempt to dismantle Sinophobic caricature. Still, even as Far casts her lot with the oppressed Chinese, she distinctly accents the figure of the Eurasian as an outcast cosmopolitan.

At the end of “Leaves,” she describes her consciousness of fluid identity as continuous: “my experiences as an Eurasian never cease” (230). After making the claim, earlier mentioned, that “I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any,” she states, “Individuality is more than nationality,” though this assertion of individuality does not lessen her sense of communal engagement (230). “I give my right hand to the Occidentals,” she writes, “And my left to the Orientals, hoping that between them they

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131 See, for example, Amy Ling’s “Pioneers and Paradigms: The Eaton Sisters” (1990).
will not utterly destroy the insignificant ‘connecting link’” (230). Whereas Burgess’s Pacific imminence rhetoric registers the event of world community as a simple matter of repeated chartings—crossings and re-crossings of geographic space, Far reroutes geographical connection through the image of a body being pulled in two directions. Juxtaposing the metonymic terms “Occidental” and “Oriental” with her own appendages—right hand and left—Far disorients the binary separation of old world and new which underscored Pacific imminence’s fixation on the idea of America’s westward progress realizing a world historical reunion of these two halves of the globe. What matters, in Far’s figuration, is the human cost of binary cartographies and the abstract harmonization of “Pan-Pacific” ideas and other capacious formulations of cosmopolitan union. Rather than celebrating herself as a translator or mediator between East and West, as some scholars have argued, Far demarcates her embodied standpoint as a uniquely perceptive commentator on covert attempts to claim the future of an increasingly globalized world.\(^\text{132}\)

Before analyzing Far’s critique of Pacific imminence, however, it is necessary to develop a clearer understanding of the imperialist cosmopolitanism that was on the rise in her time. To do so, I will address the Pan-Pacific Movement, whose activities inspired Burgess’s essay in 1925, placing special emphasis on the *Mid-Pacific Magazine*—its chief literary organ.

\(^\text{132}\) See, for example, Arnold Pan’s “Transnationalism at the Impasse of Race: Sui Sin Far and U.S. Imperialism” (2010), which reads Far’s recurrent “figure of the Chinese merchant” as expressive of the “connecting link” she evokes through her own multiracial body in “Leaves.” (88).
“Selling the Idea”: Pacific Imminence in the Progressive Era

While Burgess’s essay was published eleven years after Sui Sin Far’s death in 1914, the notion of the “Pan-Pacific” originates in the first decade of the twentieth century with the Hands-Around-the-Pacific Movement, later known as The Pan-Pacific Union.133 The organization, whose early endeavors included round-the-Pacific pleasure cruises and the establishment of a Pan-Pacific tourist bureau in New York City, had its first incarnation in the Honolulu Outrigger surfing club. Its two American founders (in 1908) were Alexander Hume Ford, a journalist for the Chicago Daily News Record, and Jack London, by this time an author with an established record of Pacific writings.134 Through the pages of its principal journal, Mid-Pacific Magazine, the Pan-Pacific Movement represents the most concentrated effort to propagate Pacific imminence rhetoric at the end of the long nineteenth century.135 As historian Tomoko Akami observes, its project was “an Americanization project, but it was not a blatant assertion of the American hegemony in the Pacific; rather, it emphasized the cooperation among Pacific powers on a relatively equal ground” (20).

As I have argued, the rhetorical-ideological formation I call Pacific imminence names a ruse of American exceptionalism that framed U.S. Pacific ascendancy as an impending development inaugurating global economic prosperity and a harmonious community of humankind. Rob Wilson rightly points out that cosmopolitanism almost

133 The organization changed its name in 1917. To refer to the organization as a sustained effort promoting the rhetoric of Pacific imminence, I will use the phrase “Pan-Pacific Movement” throughout.
134 Granted an official charter from the Territorial Government of Hawaii on May 22nd, 1917, its official publication, the Pan-Pacific Union comprised a federation of smaller racial clubs in Honolulu.
always entails “some embedded geopolitical allegory, a world mapping of contradictory locations and multiple flights from and/or toward the territory/positioning of the local (nation) and world-cultural center (cosmos)” (“A New Cosmopolitanism” 352). As expressed through the Pan-Pacific Movement during the early part of the twentieth century, Pacific imminence develops its own geopolitical allegory by reading U.S. centrality in the Pacific through the prism of its newly annexed territory: Hawai‘i.

This brand of cosmopolitanism hewed closely to Immanuel Kant’s Enlightenment forecast of “perpetual peace,” which interpreted the rise of international commerce as “a historical condition of the cosmopolitical community,” with the assumption that “commerce was incompatible with war” (Cheah “The Cosmopolitical—Today” 23). Eventually, Kant posited, “The highest purpose of nature, a universal cosmopolitan existence, will at last be realised as the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop” (51). While drawing on this “teleological theory of nature” (Kant 42), Pacific Imminence also depends on a distorted, hierarchical conception of “the human race” central to the history of modern liberalism. As Lisa Lowe explains, western liberalism’s ur-narrative of the passage from (ancient) slavery to (modern) freedom has long depended on an “economy of affirmation and forgetting” that, historically, “civilizes and develops freedoms for ‘man’ in modern Europe and North America, while relegating others to geographical and temporal spaces that are constituted as backward, uncivilized, and unfree” (3).136 Exhibiting each of these critical features, the Pan-Pacific Movement

136 “By modern liberalism,” Lowe writes, “I mean broadly the branches of European political philosophy that include the narration of political emancipation through citizenship in the state, the promise of economic freedom in the development of wage labor and exchange markets, and the conferring of civilization to human persons educated in aesthetic and national culture—in each case unifying particularity, difference, or locality through universal concepts of reason and community.” Lowe also “include[s] in this definition the literary, cultural, and aesthetic genres through which liberal notions of person, civic community, and national society are established and upheld” (3-4).
was the pre-eminent source of Pacific imminence discourse during the early twentieth century. In the following pages, I analyze this movement’s literary development through the vehicle of Ford’s *Mid-Pacific Magazine* (1911-1937).

I begin with a brief history of the Hands-Around-the-Pacific Movement’s aims, followed by a discussion of *Mid-Pacific Magazine*’s shifting representation of Hawai‘i as both the geographical focal point of Pan-Pacific community and as a microcosm for exhibiting that community’s cosmopolitan potential. In this latter discussion, I focus on Ford’s editorials from the first three years of the magazine’s run.\(^{137}\) As founding statements, I contend, they provide a window into the key features and aporias of Pacific imminence discourse during the Progressive Era. I conclude the section by examining the magazine’s links to contemporaneous discourses of Yellow Peril and Anglo-Saxonism, analyzing the alternately cosmopolitan and racist writings of Jack London, who contributed several articles to the *Mid-Pacific*, as a brief case study.

*Mid-Pacific Magazine, Hawaii, and the Imperial Cartography of Pacific Imminence*

In a 1912 article, Percy Hunter—an Australian who served as vice-president of the Hands-Around-the-Pacific Club, explained the organization’s goals. “We desire,” he writes,

> That the various great nations bordering this the World’s Greatest Ocean, should live together in true amity, that they should come to know each other better, that they should trade and travel and join in industrial and commercial activity and know no cause of quarrel or bitterness. The basis

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\(^{137}\) I do so because they are roughly contemporaneous with the publication of Far’s *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* in 1912, but also because—after 1913—these articles of “Editorial Comment” become more sporadic
of peace is knowledge, and the best way to encourage amity of nations is to ensure a knowledge, one of the other, among the nationals of each country. (405)

The mission of the Hands-Around-the-Pacific Movement, as Hunter describes it here, was chiefly epistemological. From this perspective, *Mid-Pacific Magazine*—as a literary institution that influenced knowledge-production—represented an invaluable tool for shaping the future of Pacific community.

Looking back in 1925, Alexander Hume Ford declared that, since 1907, the entirety of his written output had been dedicated to “the sole purpose of selling the idea that humans of all races in the Pacific have a common interest and that it is natural for them to work together in perfect harmony for their joint advancement” (qtd. in Hawkinson 4). Ford’s phrase “selling the idea,” which evokes the language of advertising, intimates the connection between *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, the propagandistic literary enterprise Ford oversaw for over twenty years, and the broader discourse of Pacific Imminence, which worked to re-brand U.S. imperialism for an epoch of intensifying globalization. Even so, Ford never fully suppressed the link between his cosmopolitan idealism and the United States’ imperial designs in the Pacific. In a passage quoted by Burgess, he wrote, “The scope of the work before the Pan-Pacific Union has broadened,” he wrote, “Until today it assumes some of the aspects of a friendly unofficial Pan-Pacific League of Nations, a destiny both the late Franklin K. Lane and Henry Cabot Lodge predicted for it” (qtd. in Burgess 440). By invoking the League of Nations, the first international peace-keeping organization (and one that the United States never officially joined), Ford intimates that the horizon of the Pan-Pacific Movement was a
cosmopolitan future. At the same time, his unblinking mention of Lodge, perhaps the most outspoken imperialist in the United States Senate, speaks volumes regarding the Pan-Pacific Movement’s relationship to the development of a U.S. imperial vision routed through Pacific hegemony.

If the Pan-Pacific Movement’s scope encompassed the entirety of the Pacific and implicated the whole world, its cosmopolitan propositions were frequently filtered through the prism of Hawai‘i, which became a territory of the United States following a coup by American planters and abetted by the U.S. Navy. The importance of Hawai‘i to the Movement and to Pacific imminence, generally, can be witnessed in “Honolulu for World’s Peace Conference”—an item appearing on the first page of *Mid-Pacific Magazine’s* November 1911 issue. Prompted by “an address on international peace” by Stanford President David Starr Jordan and taking the form of a resolution, the article describes Hawai‘i as a “cosmopolitan community” (400). “In these Islands as nowhere else,” it continues, “Has rational race contact regardless of color or other adventitious circumstances resulted in that ideal dwelling together in unity, the complete realization of which on a world-wide scale is being hastened as never before” (400). Such language explicitly links Hawai‘i’s “adventitious” multiracial society—in fact a product of intentionally solicited indentured labor—to a political horizon whose “complete realization” entails community “on a world-wide scale.” These words also emphasize Hawai‘i’s exceptionality (“as nowhere else”), reinforcing the conception that the United States, its parent nation, would be at the forefront of this world community. What they do not emphasize, is the fact that race relations in Hawai‘i, during this period, hardly amounted to an “ideal dwelling together in unity.” As Ronald Takaki observes, the
Progressive Era witnessed continual strife between Hawaiian plantation workers—most of whom were Asian (a group comprising sixty-two percent of the Islands’ population by 1920)—and white plantation owners, who remained a racial minority while controlling most of the land (132-76). Although interethnic solidarity increased among Hawaiian plantation workers into the early twentieth century (with coalitions sometimes including Southern European immigrants, such as the Portuguese), a stark, antagonistic divide continued to separate these groups from the white minority. This historical reality is muted in the pages of the Mid-Pacific, which sought to portray the coming of Pacific-based cosmopolitanism as somehow inevitable: a natural fact of historical development. “These Islands,” the article continues, “Are situated midway between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres at the center of the prophesied greatest theater of the world’s future activities, the Pacific, which should be kept, true to its name, an arena of peaceful contests and conquests” (400). Here the Messianic language of “prophecy” and “greatest theater of the world’s future activities” resonates with earlier prognostications of Pacific futurity by figures such as William Henry Seward, while the play on the double meaning of the word “Pacific” as a signifier of both geography and cosmopolitanism naturalizes the connection between these two ideas.

As a lavishly illustrated literary magazine filled with text, images (Ford claimed that it was “probably the most profusely illustrated literary monthly published anywhere”), and maps, Mid-Pacific Magazine charts a network of American imperial influence in the Pacific, even as it works to reify the notion of a Pan-Pacific community (“The Mid-Pacific Magazine” 394). I use the term “charts,” as opposed to “maps,” to

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138 For more on racial tensions in Hawai‘i, see David E. Stannard’s Honor Killing: How the Infamous ‘Massie Affair’ Transformed Hawai‘i (2005) and Bryan H. Farrell’s Hawaii, the Legend That Sells (1982).
utilize a useful distinction drawn from recent work on American regionalist literature. Developing the work of geographer Denis Cosgrove, early Americanists Edward Watts and Keri Holt distinguish the act of charting from that of mapping. “While chart makers,” they explain, “imagine a centralized nation wherein the local or the regional is subordinated to the national or the universal, mappings imagine just the reverse: a decentered nation that accommodates the local and the divergent” (4). They add that these oppositions unfold both temporally and spatially. Charts “usually look to the past, projecting American narratives as extensions of inherited models and myths,” while maps are usually “forward-looking” (4). In terms of spatial orientation, “mappings operate on the subcontinental and the subnational levels, [while] chartings articulate macrocosmic national, continental, and global ambitions” (4). Despite taking a futurological perspective, Mid-Pacific Magazine’s Pan-Pacific imaginary may be said to chart Pacific imminence as a natural fact of geographical coincidence, or indeed, destiny.

The Pan-Pacific network articulated by Ford and Mid-Pacific Magazine can be glimpsed in the map in figure 1 below, which precedes Percy Hunter’s primer on the Hands-Around-the-Pacific Movement. There are at least three key elements of which to take note. First is the magnification of Hawai‘i, whose islands are greatly enlarged. Next, the map centralizes Hawai‘i, extending a web of quantified distances to other key nodes in what already appears as an American-controlled, superregional space. Thirdly, it is notable that Latin America is completely excluded—its presence suggested only by the word “Panama”)—suggesting the Magazine’s concentration on Asian-Pacific and Oceanian nations. Indeed, the first volumes of Mid-Pacific Magazine rarely contain stories on Latin America, although this would change with the opening of the Panama
Canal. As an act of imperial charting, this representation of the Pacific can be read either centrifugally—disseminating Americanness to outer regional territories—or centripetally, as a kind of gravitational figure where Hawai‘i works to condense an otherwise unwieldy inter-hemispheric space. In either case, the map may be read as what Jean Baudrillard famously terms a hyperreal simulation, wherein “the territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it” (166). As with the overarching project of Pacific imminence, it entails a practice whereby “simulators,” like Ford and his associates, “Try to make the real, all the real, coincide with their simulation models” (166).  

Fig. 1 (from *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, May 1912)

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139 The imperial undercurrent of such projections were later (by the middle of the twentieth century) made manifest in what Cynthia Enloe has described as a “mental map” of “military interconnectedness.” “When American military planners look at the world these days,” she writes, “They imagine territories encircling the Pacific ocean as part of a single security—or insecurity—chain. To be sure, this ‘Pacific Rim’ must be strung with a necklace of American-controlled military bases: from Anchorage to San Diego, Hawai‘i, Vladivostok, Seoul, Yokohama, Cam Rahn Bay, Subic Bay and Clark, Wellington, Bellau and Kwajelein” (85).
Ford certainly recognized each possible interpretation. For example, he embraced the centrifugal account when reporting on the rise of Sun Yat-sen in China. Referring to Sun’s childhood education in Hawai‘i, Ford was eager to claim him for the cause of the Pan-Pacific Movement. “It seems,” he wrote in April 1912, “as though Hawaii and the Hands-Around-the-Pacific Club are to give a president to the new Republic of China” (“Editorial Comment” 396). Such co-optation resembles the U.S. appropriation of José Rizal, discussed in the previous chapter. However, Ford also made use of a centripetal, or gravitational reading of the above chart. Hawaii, in this sense, represents a geographical construct used to shrink the Pacific’s massive area to a more malleable size. In April 1913, he wrote, “The Pacific is contracting and the people of its shores are beginning to know each other” (“Editorial Comment” 396). Almost every issue of Mid-Pacific contains a reference to Hawai‘i—or sometimes Honolulu—as being at “the crossroads of the Pacific” (Ford “Editorial Comment,” Jan 1911, 93). Like Sui Sin Far’s self-representation in “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian,” Hawaii represents its own kind of “connecting link” among Pacific nations. However, in direct contrast to Far’s anguished image of the Eurasian body—pulled in two directions across the Pacific, Mid-Pacific Magazine stage manages Pan-Pacific accord as a natural consequence of global positioning (Far 125).

“Honolulu for the World’s Peace Conference” also suggests how Mid-Pacific Magazine continually posited Hawaii as a synecdoche or microcosm of the Pacific. Ford insisted that “the Mid-Pacific [Magazine] is not a Hawaiian but an all-Pacific magazine” (“Editorial Comment,” July 1912 96). Upon this premise, Ford implicitly casts the fiction of Hawai‘i’s racial harmony as a model for Pan-Pacific unity. While acknowledging
Hawaii as an exceptional case in the present, he nonetheless represents it as an index of an imminent cosmopolitanism. These islands, his magazine suggests, constitute an exception that proves the rule. This paradox was manifest in a recurrent rhetorical slippage, whereby Ford laid claim to Hawaiian exceptionality (in relation to present racial antagonisms) and exemplarity (in relation to a future of racial harmony). For example, in September 1912 he wrote, “In Hawaii as elsewhere in the world humanity is better than nationality. There are many nationalities in Hawaii—as there are in New England—but there is but one humanity the whole world over” (“Editorial Comment” 296). Hence, developed as a hyperreal geographic figure that is at once “as nowhere” and “as elsewhere,” Ford’s Hawai‘i functions as a predictive model for imminent world community—a microcosmopolitan figure—routed through cartographies of U.S.-directed, transpacific commerce.

A clue to the theoretical premise of this world community may be found in Ford’s editorial for the November 1911 issue, in which he returns to the event of David Starr Jordan’s address. Jordan, an ichthyologist, world peace advocate, and committed eugenicist, gave a speech on August 15th in Honolulu to an assembly that included “Polynesians, Chinese, Portuguese, Australians, Americans, Japanese, New Zealanders, Latins, and Canadians” (496). Building on the content of “Honolulu for the World’s

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140 Although he does not examine the Pan-Pacific Movement or the Pacific’s cosmopolitan associations, Rob Wilson points out that “from 1820 if not earlier in its entangled contacts with nation-states, Hawai‘i was fated to be趟ped into an American ‘crossroads of the Pacific’” (Reimagining the American Pacific 86). “Conjured into a paradise, pleasure periphery, and profit zone in the Pacific, Hawai‘i proved object and victim of the Euro-American imagination” (86).

141 Jordan’s writings on eugenics illustrates how white American figures valorized by the Pan-Pacific Movement remained deeply engaged with ideologies of race purification. Jordan served as initial board member of the Human Betterment Foundation, an organization based in Pasadena, California, which advocated for the sterilization of the mentally ill and handicapped. Another board member and central figure of the Foundation was E. S. Gosney, a man who bankrolled compulsory sterilization in the state of California. A study he produced in conjunction with fellow eugenicist Paul Popenoe was later cited by the
Peace Conference,” Ford makes explicit the connection between Hawaii, the Pacific, and Cosmopolitanism. He notes three main geopolitical players in his account of “Peace and the Pacific”: Japan, Australia, and the United States. Japan’s modernizing momentum (and naval expansion, particularly) haunts much of the Pan-Pacific Movement’s discourse in *Mid-Pacific Magazine* and Ford notes that “Dr. Jordan is carrying the Message of Peace” to this nation (496). He then speaks to the importance of America’s friendship with Australia, another white-majority nation, for securing the prospects of world peace. He writes, “America and Australia joining hands across the Pacific may be made to absolutely secure the assurance of perpetual peace on the great ocean” (496). Ford’s use of the term, “perpetual peace,” makes a telling reference to Kant’s essay of the same title, the ur-text of Enlightenment-derived cosmopolitan thinking. “Perpetual Peace” was first translated for an American readership in 1897 by Benjamin Franklin Trueblood, President of the American Peace Society (established in 1828 and still active today as the publisher of *World Affairs*).

Ford may have been familiar with Kant’s arguments from this translation, or perhaps through Trueblood’s derivative work *The Federation of the World* (1899), which was published shortly after the United States became an official imperialist power in the Pacific with the annexation of Hawai‘i and colonization of the Philippines. Saturated in Kantian logic, Trueblood characterized his discussion of world federation as an historical inevitability. Among his aims, he writes, is to show “from actual historic movements and recent social and international achievements that the social and political unity of the

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That Trueblood did not entirely shed nationalist connections is suggested in the title of his work’s final chapter: “The United States of the World” (118). The justifications for a “great international world state,” he argues, “Are precisely the same as for a federal union of local governments extending over a wide territory, like our own republic” (125). He then goes on to sketch the ways in which the cosmopolitan future would be built according to a U.S. model. With or without knowledge of Trueblood’s treatise, Ford’s basic reliance on a Kantian version of cosmopolitanism may be witnessed throughout the career of Mid-Pacific Magazine.

Drawing on Kant’s commercial premises, the Pan-Pacific Movement’s vision of cosmopolitanism was always linked to the project of U.S. imperial hegemony. As editor of Mid-Pacific Magazine, Ford strove to produce a vision of world community that established the United States as the natural choice to assume a hegemonic position in the Pacific. Criticizing the removal of protections on Hawaiian agriculture in 1913, he wrote: This grand ocean is still to be the center of the world’s greatest activity, and the events now transpiring are certain to have a wide influence in developing the paramount interest of this part of the Globe. Far-sighted wisdom is essential and that Nation will prevail which displays the greatest possession of that quality. The attitude of the United States toward Hawaii is a matter of great moment throughout the whole Pacific. (596) This statement encapsulates the sense of urgency attaching to Pacific imminence discourse. If a world community was imminent, Ford reasons, so too is the moment of opportunity for a leading nation to seize the reigns of that community.
Yet the problem of racial antagonism throughout the Pacific remained. To understand how Ford dealt with this problem, it is useful to read two of his editorials from 1913. In March, Ford utilized the Kantian principle of federation to smooth over the problem of exclusionary immigration policies in Australia, Japan, and the United States. This modification retools Kant in a fundamental way, since, as Pheng Cheah observes, his conception of cosmopolitanism was formulated at a time when the modern nation-state had not come to dominate Europe as a political form.142 “All of this [exclusionary policy],” Ford writes, “Does not mean that the nations of the Pacific may not get together in a friendly movement looking toward the commercial control of the Pacific by the peoples of the Pacific” (296). What is remarkable, and important, for understanding the federative political vision of Pacific imminence is that, unlike Sui Sin Far, Ford does not see cosmopolitanism as attendant upon a mixing of races. “Someday,” he writes, “It will become absurd to cry ‘White Australia’ or ‘Yellow Japan,’” since “Australia will mean “white” as Japan will mean ‘Yellow’” (296). By this reasoning, Ford concludes that “the nations of the Pacific are rapidly drifting toward an understanding that each nation shall be left alone to work out its own destiny along the line it elects; while all shall work in harmony for interchange of commerce among all the peoples of the great ocean” (296). Like Kant, who based his theory of cosmopolitanism on channeling humanity’s natural “unsocial sociability” (“Idea for a Universal History” 44), Ford postulates a liberal model of Pan-Pacific unity that nonetheless maintains separateness of the races and utilizes competition of the free market.

142 “The original antagonist of Kant’s cosmopolitanism,” he explains, “is . . . absolute statism and its appropriate historical context is not the age of nationalism but the interstate system of anarchy established by the Treaty of Westphalia after the breakup of the vast religious communities of the medieval period” (Cheah “The “Cosmopolitical—Today” 24).
In September, he addressed the question of Chinese Exclusion directly. Without advocating for the repeal of exclusion laws in the United States or other countries, Ford exhibits the central importance of a global commerce narrative to the complex rhetoric of Pacific imminence. Evoking this narrative, Ford solves the problem of persistent racial antagonisms around the Pacific by placing his faith in global economic development, which, at some point, will raise Asian workers’ standards such that they will no longer undercut white labor. “Neither in America nor in Australia,” he writes, “Is the Oriental feared for any reason than that his standard of living is not so high as that set by the Occidental” (296). Once the global living standard has been raised, he argues, exclusion laws might still exist, but no one will take further issue with them. “When by united, friendly, commercial foresight and aid of all nations, the standard of living and wages is made as high in Japan as in California, there will be no fear of exclusion laws. Each nationality will be welcomed in the country of the other” (296). The immediate action Ford advocates, for white-majority nations such as the United States and Australia, is “to promote any movement looking toward the raising of the standard of living in the Orient” (296). The subtext, therefore, is a call for more globalization, articulated ostensibly to dispel the problem of anti-Asian sentiment, via the opening of Asian-Pacific markets for the consumption of American goods. Ford’s abstract reasoning in these editorials illustrate the extent to which he viewed the Pan-Pacific project through the lens of a cosmopolitan Hawai‘i itself constructed in the pages of Mid-Pacific Magazine. Positioned as the so-called “cross-

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143 As Colleen Lye observes, dominant Asian stereotypes such as those of “yellow peril” and the more recent “model minority” “are best understood as two aspects of the same, long-running racial form . . . the trope of economic efficiency” (5).

144 See Eperjesi, 57.
roads” of the Pacific, this hyperreal Hawai‘i functioned as a microcosm of cosmopolitan spectacle even as it emerged, through the development of the naval base at Pearl Harbor, as the geographic hub of U.S. imperialism. To reiterate my earlier analysis, this version of Hawai‘i served at least two key purposes. At the cultural level, it worked as a centripetal representation of imminent Pacific futurity calling disparate cultures together and staging them in cosmopolitan harmony. At the material level, however, it works as an imperial centrifuge, with the islands constituting a launching point for the nation’s hegemonic commercial and militaristic enterprises. Deploying this discursive construct, *Mid-Pacific Magazine* and the Pan-Pacific Movement finessed the frictions of U.S. foreign relations even as other areas of America’s transpacific imperial network, such as the Philippines and Chinatowns of the American west coast, remained subject to policies of colonialism, exclusion, and other forms of institutional racism.

Pacific Imminence or Yellow Peril? “Hawaii for the White Man” and the Case of Jack London

However, even as Ford worked to foster this vision, other contributors to the magazine evince, particularly in its early issues, that the Pan-Pacific Movement remained tethered to contemporary discourses of white nationalism. An illustrative example can be found in Van Norden’s “Hawaii for the White Man” (1911), published in the magazine’s first issue. This article naturalizes connections among whiteness, Hawaii, and what Walt Whitman predicted, in *Democratic Vistas* (1871), as the United States’ “mastership” of the Pacific “and its countless paradises of islands” (30). Owing to its temperate climate, Norden proclaims that “Hawaii is the one land within the tropics created by Nature for
the white man” (629). At the same time, he reiterates the centrality of Hawai‘i to unlocking Pacific trade—“Honolulu is at the commercial crossroads of the great ocean . . . here is the business center where Occident and Orient meet”—and reiterates *Mid-Pacific Magazine*’s general advocacy for the Islands’ Americanization (634).

“Hawaii is today the land of opportunity for the quick, courageous white man,” he explains, “and every one, from President Taft down, wished to see it conquered for and by Anglo-Saxon Americans” (631). As Norden’s piece demonstrates, *Mid-Pacific Magazine*’s anchorage to discourses of Anglo-Saxonism and related visions of white American supremacy in the Pacific were never fully suppressed as ideological premises. Indeed, they are sometimes traceable at the very surface of what Ann Laura Stoler has evocatively termed “the archival grain.”

To appreciate the scope of these racializing visions, however, it is useful to consider the work of Jack London, a figure who placed one tentative foot in the Pan-Pacific movement while keeping the other planted firmly in anti-Asian discourse of yellow peril.

In a photograph that accompanies Norden’s “Hawaii for the White Man,” London appears next to J. P. Cooke and Lorrin Thurston, two prominent members of Hawaii’s white plantocracy. Along with Alexander Hume Ford, London co-founded the Honolulu Outrigger Club, a small surfing group comprised of “ten young boys of all races residing in Hawaii” (Hawkinson 1). In a 1911 “Pacific Personalities” feature on

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146 As John Eperjesi points out, the socialist London was surprisingly fond of spending time with this capitalist ruling class (121-22).
147 The first iteration of the Pan-Pacific Union as a surfing club casts light on the iconography of its imperial cosmopolitanism. As a relic of a native culture U.S. interests were actively working supplant since the early nineteenth century, white appropriation of surfing registers how the organization, chiefly through Ford’s *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, valorized spectacles of cross-cultural appreciation and racial harmony while implicitly supporting the cause of U.S. imperialism.
his friend, Ford describes London as a man “born on the shores of the Pacific” and whose “stories from the Pacific” have made his name “known around the globe” (291). In 1918, two years after London’s death, he remembered the author as central to the cause of *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, “The Pan Pacific movement . . . was born during Jack London’s first stay in Hawaii, and with Jack London and Joséph Platt Cooke, the birth of the Pan Pacific Union is closely identified” (“Our Hawaii” 327). It is surprising, given these remarks, that contemporary scholars almost never discuss London’s work in relation to the Movement and its cosmopolitan ideas. In the remainder of this section, I examine one of London’s Pan-Pacific texts, published in *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, in relation to yellow peril journalism and fiction he produced in the early twentieth century.

Although scholars continue to debate the terms and limits of London’s racism, the virulence of his anti-Asian rhetoric in the early twentieth century suggests a strong and unbending aversion to Asian peoples, cultivated during his coverage of the Russo-Japanese War from 1904 to 1905. Hence, his Pan-Pacific commitments must be viewed in relation to this more established racializing tendency. In the August 1915 issue of *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, London published an article entitled “The Language of the Tribe,” which advocates for the creation of a “Pan-Pacific Club” in Hawai‘i where “men of all races can come, where they can eat together and smoke together” to foster the development of what he terms a “world language” of mutual understanding (119). However, these sentiments seem little more than cocktail-hour cosmopolitanism when compared to the genocidal fantasy he indulged in “The Unparalleled Invasion,” a story published in *McClure’s* just five years earlier in 1910. In direct contradiction to “The Language of the Tribe,” “The Unparalleled Invasion” insists that between western nations
and China there “was no common psychological speech” (“Invasion” 72). “Their thought-processes,” London writes, “were radically dissimilar. There was no intimate vocabulary. . . . It was all a matter of language. There was no way to communicate Western ideas to the Chinese mind. . . . The fabrics of their minds were woven from totally different stuffs. They were mental aliens” (72-73). The story thus constructs an insurmountable linguistic divide through which London theorizes a perverse globalism premised on the representation of China and Japan (the fast-modernizing nation which catalyzes China’s awakening)—as universal antagonists. The story resolves with an alliance of western nations dropping small glass tubes filled with disease-carrying mosquitos over China, spreading a variety of plagues that eradicate its entire population.

While it might be possible to argue that London’s story intends a critique of industrial and germ-warfare, the fact that “The Unparalleled Invasion” appears before, rather than after, the devastations of the First World War makes this unlikely. There is, moreover, the evidence of London’s journalistic essays “The Yellow-Peril” (1904) and “If Japan Awakens China” (1909). In the former, London again fixates on exclusive language ties and relates it to the bond of race. Writing from Manchuria, he describes as ominous the increasingly “familiar scene” of the Chinese and Japanese communicating with one another. Evoking a Chinese civilian and Japanese soldier in one such encounter, he writes, “One dips his forefinger in the dust and writes strange, monstrous characters. The other nods understanding . . . They are talking” (“Yellow-Peril” 279). The conclusion London draws is that “the menace to the Western world lies, not in the little brown man (the Japanese), but in the four hundred millions of yellow men should the little brown man undertake their management” (281).
What is remarkable about “The Unparalleled Invasion,” when we consider Jack London’s involvement with the Pan-Pacific Movement, is that it integrates Sinophobia into a perverse vision of cosmopolitanism built on the exclusion of an exceptional other. As Colleen Lye observes, “Whether [London’s] strange dependence of interracial harmony upon racial genocide intends a critical irony or confirms an unreflective prejudice, structurally it is significant that utopian arrival and Asiatic disappearance should [as in a comparable scene from 1908’s *The Iron Heel*] again be made to coincide” (41). The utopia that London here imagines, I contend, engenders a new cosmopolitan harmony among nations. After China is sanitized according to a “democratic American program,” London writes, “It was a vast and happy intermingling of nationalities that settled own in China in 1982 and the years that followed—a tremendous and successful experiment in cross-fertilization. We know to-day the splendid mechanical, intellectual, and art output that followed (“Invasion” 10).

Even when irredentism between France and Germany arises to challenge this peaceful arrangement five years later, a convention is held in which “all nations solemnly pledged themselves never to use against one another the laboratory methods of warfare they had employed in the invasion of China” (100). Hence, even while London’s utopic cosmopolitanism proves short-lived, it bears fruits in “mechanical, intellectual, and art output” and leaves the surviving nations, none of which possess a wholly different “psychological speech,” in a post-Chinese world of heightened international understanding where potential conflicts are handled through processes of rational

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148 In this respect, London’s vision constitutes a militarist update on Melville’s Pacific gothic, explored in Chapter 2.
149 This arrangement recalls Benjamin Trueblood’s cosmopolitan prophesy of a coming moment “when arbitration has at last come into general and permanent use throughout the civilized world” (122).
discourse that China’s power once threatened (72). The magnitude of London’s racist fantasy, which jars so dramatically with his work in *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, provides a clear example of how the Pan-Pacific Movement’s cosmopolitan vision was often compromised by deeper investments in virulent anti-Asian feeling and epistemologies of racial essentialism. It is only through comparative reading practices that link the Movement’s abstraction of a hyperreal Hawaiʻi to other local sites of exclusion—such as the Chinatown milieus of Sui Sin Far’s short fiction, that this basic dissonance become legible to literary-historical analysis.

**Sui Sin Far’s Transpacific Regionalism**

While Ford and his magazine abstracted from the local space of Hawaiʻi to propagate Pacific imminence discourse, Far’s regionalist fiction uses the ghettoized space of San Francisco’s Chinatown to articulate how the imperial domain of a persistent white supremacist culture prevents the lived expression of mixed-race being as an embodied form of cosmopolitanism. She utilizes this figure’s dilemma, in an age of Chinese Exclusion, to articulate how the racializing institutions of U.S. imperialism preclude the emergence of a *normatively* cosmopolitan world despite contemporary proclamations to the contrary. To repeat her sentiments from “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian”:

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150 Tellingly, even as London conjures this narrative of global alliance, he cannot help but display his deep aversion to racial intermixture. While describing the invasion of China, on the heels of the biological attack, London slips in a figure of hybridity as devastating chimera by noting that the biggest setback to the western forces comes when a hybrid germ forms from amidst the variety of plagues ravaging China. “A new plague-germ had originated,” he writes, “A sort of hybridization between plague-germs . . . producing a new and frightfully virulent germ” (“Invasion” 97).
Only when the whole world becomes as one family will human beings be able to see clearly and hear distinctly. I believe that some day a great part of the world will be Eurasian. I cheer myself with the thought that I am but a pioneer. A pioneer should glory in suffering. (224)

Importantly, then, Far’s self-derived figure of the Eurasian does not constitute a model of normative cosmopolitanism for the present. Associating it with the distant emergence of a more racially-mixed world community, she therefore presents the Eurasian as an “actually existing cosmopolita[n]” (Malcolmson 238) and devotes herself to the critique of “the actual historical and geographic contexts” that prohibit its emergence (Robbins 2). She does this by drawing on the literary resources of regionalism.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, American literary scholarship derided regionalism, valorizing, instead, the northeastern literary establishment’s preference for the universal purview of the realist novel. As Elizabeth Ammons observes, American literary history to the Progressive Era was, until the early 1990s, divided into five general phases: 1) a gestational period during the colonial and early years of the republic; 2) a “coming of age” in the early nineteenth century, emblematized in the works of Irving, Cooper, and Poe; 3) the mid-nineteenth century period commonly referred to using F. O. Matthiesen’s notion of “the American Renaissance, associated with figures such as Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman; 4) a transition from romanticism to realism,” dominated by the likes of Howells, James, and Twain; and, finally, 5) the modernist period, linked to Faulkner, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway (3). None of these phases, one finds, highlights the literary contributions of women. Since the late twentieth century, however, path-breaking work by Ammons, Judith Fetterley, Marjorie Pryse,
Stephanie Foote, and other feminist scholars has done much to showcase a prodigious body of regionalist literature—mostly written by women—produced between the Reconstruction and Progressive Eras.

Before discussing Far’s regionalist style, however, I need to address her relationship to “local color writing,” which has long been associated with regionalism but which, in recent years, has been increasingly analyzed as a distinct literary mode. In *Writing Out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture* (2003), Judith Fetterley and Marjorie Pryse make an influential distinction. In their account, regionalism resists, while local color commodifies. In contrast to local color writing, they argue, “Literary regionalism uncovers the ideology of local color and reintroduces an awareness of ideology into discussions of regionalist politics” (6). While attractive in its clarity, this binary division has been persuasively complicated by recent scholars, such as Jonathan David Shelly Schroeder, who, by analyzing local color’s roots in the art of painting, draws it away from its conventional affiliation with regionalism and towards the tradition of American literary realism.151

In this chapter, I read Far’s work as blurring boundaries between regionalism and local color, while exceeding the latter’s investment in the cosmopolitanism of writers such as William Dean Howells and Henry James. Importantly, Far’s work is distinct from much regional literature for several reasons. In the first place, she rarely uses dialect. Secondly, her works do not utilize frame narrators. Most importantly, however, it focuses

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151 For an important account of local color from the early Progressive Era, see Hamlin Garland’s “Local Color in Art” (1894). Garland’s account of local color is nativist, insofar as he conceives it as “a statement of life as indigenous as the plant-growth” (64). “Local color in a novel,” he writes, “Means that it has such quality of texture and back-ground that it could not have been written in any other place or by any one else than a native” (64).
on urban, as opposed to rural or isolated spaces.\textsuperscript{152} Her typical milieu is the ghettoized space of Chinatown, which, as a term in and of itself, telescopes the global into the regional. As one of various translocal sites—Chinatowns exist throughout the world—Chinatown constitutes a diasporic miniature.\textsuperscript{153} Hence, her uncommon spatial focus and narrative tendencies require a flexible definition of regionalism. Like Stephanie Foote, I see regionalism not as “a coherent genre,” but rather as a “remarkably coherent system of ordering and presenting places and characters who were, when measured against a standard middle-class identity, distinctly foreign” (14). I also concur with John Funchion that regionalism “capaciously encompasses a variety of coterminous and successive literary and theoretical projects, including but not limited to local color writing” (272).

Nevertheless, while I read Far’s regionalism as engaged with the “cosmopolitan project of self-cultivation” Schroeder reattaches to local colorism (573), I contend that Far’s concern with cosmopolitanism exceeds what Tom Lutz calls “literary cosmopolitanism” (20).

In his brief consideration of Far’s work, Lutz states that her “stories about Mrs. Spring Fragrance, for instance, are classic insider/outside tales, with an oscillating perspective that never allows any of the characters’ discrepant cosmopolitanisms to take precedence, and this is why she has been so frequently anthologized” (181). While this analysis is certainly true of some of Far’s work, it discounts the unambiguous critiques of

\textsuperscript{152} Exceptions appear in Far’s Caribbean fiction. These comprise two stories, “The Sugar Cane Baby” (1910) and “Away Down in Jamaica” (1898), which each accentuate the tropical environments of the West Indies. In “Away Down in Jamaica,” Far crafts a local color narrative of colonial Jamaica that involves a “brown” woman named Clarissa who, to exact revenge on a white man who has abandoned her, poisons his white fiancée (who is, herself, in love with another white man). Although Clarissa may be read as a mixed-race character, her character’s self-consciousness of racial liminality is never explored.

\textsuperscript{153} As White-Parks observes, the formation of West Coast Chinatowns was driven as much by Chinese wanting to find shelter in numbers as it was the result of civic legislation that “forc[ed] the growth of separate cultural communities” (106).
white supremacy she delivers in work that do not adhere to Lutz’s conception of regionalist fiction as never “resolving debates” between antagonistic positions, but instead “oscillat[ing] between the sides, producing, finally, a complex symphony of cultural voices and positions” (31). My argument is that while Far was interested in this kind of literature, it was not the only kind she valued. If one reads her cosmopolitanism only through the figure of Mrs. Spring Fragrance, a Chinese woman with Americanized manners and writerly ambitions, one will certainly find the development of literary cosmopolitanism. However, as I will argue in the remainder of this chapter, Far’s work does not only invite readers to become literary cosmopolitans. She also constructs partial fictions—derived from her own anguished experiences as a multiracial Chinese American woman—that respond critically to a political moment in which cosmopolitanism, as a normative cultural program, was being extolled on imperialist premises by literary contemporaries around the Pacific. Reading her fiction as a critique of this Pacific imminence discourse focalizes her “actually existing cosmopolitanism” and acknowledges the defiant political determinacy she displays in works that directly address it as a way of being.

To appreciate Far’s critique of Pacific imminence in the Progressive years requires that we read her regionalism in transpacific, rather than nationalist terms. With rare exception, however, most critics do not examine her work’s relationship to any transpacific literary culture, but instead take its attention to the Chinese in continental

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154 In “The Inferior Woman,” she plans to write an ironic ethnographic book on the “interesting and mysterious” Americans “for her Chinese women friends” (Mrs. Spring Fragrance 47).

155 In 1912, two years before her death, Far wrote a biographical piece for the Boston Globe. In this article, she reveals her intention “to form all my characters upon the model of myself” (“Sui Sin Far” 292) and states her belief that the “true fathers and mothers of the world were those who battled through great trials and hardships to leave to future generations noble and inspiring truths” (290).
North America as the measure of her transpacific engagement. Traditional readings of Far’s work highlight how it positively portrays the kind of Chinese humanity—signaled by affective interiority—deemed inscrutable or non-existent by Orientalist and Yellow Peril discourses. While this is certainly an important context through which to understand her work, it has had the effect of limiting its critical range. By juxtaposing Far’s work against that of the Pan-Pacific Movement, it becomes possible to read her stories as regional criticism of the globalizing, abstract tendencies of Pacific imminence. To do so, I contend, is to read her work as reaching through and beyond the immediate problem of Chinese exclusion, which it certainly targets, to address the antinomies of a regionalist model of cosmopolitanism deployed for imperialist ends. Therefore, if Ford’s *Mid-Pacific Magazine* sought to contract the Pacific, Sui Sin Far’s regionalist work serves to articulate the workings of U.S. imperialism from another Pacific locale: San Francisco’s Chinatown.

To more distinctly formulate my conception of what Far’s regionalist work does, I draw on the recent work of Lisa Lowe, which reads across archives to illustrate “the pronounced asymmetry of the colonial divisions of humanity that undergird western liberalism” (16). The connection between this liberal tradition and the Pan-Pacific

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156 Important exceptions, here, are found in the work of Mary Chapman and June Howard. In “A ‘Revolution in Ink’: Sui Sin Far and Chinese Reform” (2008), Chapman illustrates that Far’s work “demonstrate[s] the tension between Chinese reform discourses and U.S. Progressive Era reform discourses” but represents “less a rejection of political roles for women than an effort to locate an alternative to U.S. feminism more suitable to the modernity embraced by her Chinese and Chinese American peers” (993). Chapman also emphasizes Far’s status as a transcontinental and pan-American figure, whose life and work took her to Montreal (where she spent several of her childhood years) and Jamaica (where she briefly worked as a journalist). In “Sui Sin Far’s American Words,” June Howard reveals the intertextual link between Far’s frequently studied story “The Americanization of Pau Tsu” and the poetry of Ban Jieyu, wife of the Han emperor Cheng in the year eighteen B.C.E.

157 See, for example, Annette White-Parks’s *Sui Sin Far/Edith Maude Eaton: A Literary Biography* (1995) and “A Reversal of American Concepts of ‘Other-ness’ in the Fiction of Sui Sin Far” (1995). Key examples of the Yellow Peril writings to which Sui Sin Far may have wished to respond were Frank Norris’s “The Third Circle” (1897) and Olive Dibert’s “Chinese Lily” (1903).
Movement can be traced in the latter’s emphasis on expanding individual liberties and promoting free trade among Pacific nations and the Kantian notions of tolerance that feature prominently in its cosmopolitan rhetoric. It may also be glimpsed in the self-stylings of its key affiliates, such as David Starr Jordan, who, in another *Overland* article by Burgess, was said to “see himself as part of the history of liberal thought” and even called himself “a Minor Prophet of Democracy” (“Dr. Jordan’s Conference” 174). Lowe observes that what some liberal commentators—among whom I would include Jordan, Trueblood, and Ford—describe as human progress from “colonial abjection to liberal freedom actually elides what might be more properly conceived as a *spatial dynamic*, in which forms of both liberal subject and society in the imperial center are possible only in relation to laboring lives in the colonized geographies or ‘zones of exception’ with which they coexist, however disavowed” (16, emphasis mine). Understanding and limning a related spatial dynamic, Far’s work undermines the dissembling network of the Pan-Pacific, centered on the exceptional space of a hyperreal Hawai’i, by narrating elided practices of exclusion and racist social abuse occurring at sites within the United States’ territorial borders (i.e. the transpacific spaces of Chinatowns and surrounding areas) that intersect this network’s covertly imperial cartography.\(^{158}\)

To articulate this subversion, I read Far’s mixed-race stories as developing a transpacific regionalism, a critical literature that counters the universalizing fiction of the Pan-Pacific with a localized fiction of Eurasian resistance that returns the vision of Pacific imminence to its unequal conditions of possibility. How might regionalist

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\(^{158}\) This attention may be seen as a feature of urban local color. As Foote observes, "Urban local color is not exactly parallel to pastoral regionalism. Rather, urban local color replaces past/temporality with *space/proximity*, engaging the very historical facts that pastoral local color suppresses" (125, emphasis mine).
literature, typically thought of as linked to a single location, engender a *transpacific*
interest? My concept of transpacific regionalism builds on recent studies of the
interaction of networks, which, as Caroline Levine observes, should be considered not as
the antithesis of form, but rather as “distinct forms—as defined patterns of
interconnection and exchange that organize social and aesthetic experience” (118).

If Ford and his associates at *Mid-Pacific Magazine* imagine the Pan-Pacific as a
centralized, cosmopolitan network centralized by the U.S. Territory of Hawai‘i (see
figure 1), Far’s transpacific regionalism re-maps this network from the ghettoized space
of Chinatown. As though re-mapping the blocked neural pathways of a globalist brain,
Far’s mixed-race fiction restores to Pacific imminence rhetoric its cognitive dissonances.
In doing so, it tempers the latter’s expansive cosmopolitan vision by indexing its
undisclosed “geographical knowledges and prejudices” (Harvey 536).

The imaginary networks developed by *Mid-Pacific Magazine* and Far are
coeextensive with a transpacific American print network active through the Progressive
Era. Far was part of this network, whose key sites included San Francisco, Los Angeles,
Hawai‘i, and Manila. Contributing a series of articles on the Chinese to the *Los
Angeles Express*, Far’s stories and writings also appeared in the *Land of Sunshine*, later
renamed *Out West* magazine. In 1923, *Out West* merged with the *Overland Monthly*, a
magazine that published Far’s story “A Chinese Ishmael” (1899) and featured several
stories on the Pan-Pacific Movement from 1925 through 1927. As a journalist and writer

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159 Levine points out that, until recently, networks have been conceived as the opposite of form. She cites
Deleuze and Guattari’s highly influential concept of the rhizome, an egalitarian web of shallow,
interconnected roots, which they oppose to the centralized root system of the tree. See Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015), 117.
160 Publication cities for *Mid-Pacific*
of fiction, Far’s engagement with transpacific issues resonates with the Pan-Pacific’s topics of interest, though her perspective often accentuates Chinese interests over and above American ones. In her 1903 article for the *Los Angeles Express* “Leung Ki Chu and His Wife,” Far demonstrates her concern with distinguishing Chinese reformism with the imperialist project of Americanization. Speaking of Los Angeles merchants who support the cause of Chinese reform, she states, “They are men of education, but though entertaining advanced ideas, they are not Americanized Chinamen—they are Chinese Chinamen of the sort that a citizen of the world can be proud to know” (*Other Writings* 207). As Annette White-Parks notes, the *Montreal Gazette* reported that Sui Sin Far actually met with Sun Yat-sen on his visit to Montreal in “the early part of the [twentieth] century” (139). As I discussed in the previous chapter [on Rizal], Sun stated that the Western Powers’ “doctrine of cosmopolitanism is in fact the doctrine of imperialism in disguise” (32). Hence, with community connections in North American Chinatowns, Far was engaged in the same geopolitical network as that of *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, even as her work underscores ongoing practices of racialized subjugation the Hawaiian-based periodical sought to silence.

In what remains of this chapter, I will analyze Far’s 1912 short story “‘Its Wavering Image’” as articulating a networked, regionalist critique of Pacific imminence. As I will show, critique entails two layers of transpacific networking: the one I have just described, in which Sui Sin Far was herself a physical participant, and a related, literary network, that unfolds through her use of intertextual allusions within the story. I begin by demonstrating that Far frames the problem of cosmopolitanism as one of aesthetics. I then explore her use of naming as an indicator of her investment in the idea of Eurasian
consciousness as an actually existing form of cosmopolitanism. I close this section, and conclude the chapter, with a discussion of how Far appropriates the work of canonical, white male literary figures to critique the unequal universalisms to which they were coupled by U.S. imperial institutions.

Published three years after “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian,” “Its Wavering Image” is one of Far’s most commonly discussed stories. Nevertheless, it has never been discussed in relation to cosmopolitanism. The story concerns Pan, identified in the opening lines as a “half white, half Chinese girl” (Mrs. Spring Fragrance 80). Living with her widowed father, Man You, a Chinese merchant, the narrator states that she does not consider herself an anomaly in the San Francisco Chinatown community where she has spent her entire life. “It was only after the coming of Mark Carson,” the narrator explains, “That the mystery of her nature began to trouble her” (80). Carson, a muckraking journalist, meets Pan in her father’s shop, becomes infatuated with her, and then uses her to gain insider information about Chinatown for a sensationalistic newspaper article (196). While seducing her, Carson repeatedly pressures Pan to forsake her Chinese identity, insistent that she is “white.” This insistence culminates one evening when the two lovers are standing on the roof of Man You’s shop looking, alternately, at the streets below and a new moon overhead. “How beautiful above! How unbeautiful below!” Carson exclaims (82). At this moment, Far sets the stage for an allegory of reading wherein literary regionalism repudiates the aesthetics of white supremacy. Carson’s “unbeautiful below” is represented by the narrator as “the lantern-lighted, motley-thronged street” (82). “Perhaps it isn’t very beautiful,” Pan replies, “But it is here that I live. It is my home” (82). The emphasis placed on beauty at this key moment,
which proceeds the characters’ first kiss, links the story to Far’s notion that the achievement of a cosmopolitan society (“when the whole world becomes as one family”) would necessarily coincide with a clarifying of the senses (“will human beings be able to see clearly and hear distinctly”) (“Leaves” 223-24).

Through this scene, Far stages the deep cultural tension between a universalist aesthetics, inherited from Enlightenment thinkers such as Kant (in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*), and a local aesthetics, which ascribes value based on familiarity, memory, and the partiality of attachment. This opposition resonates with American realism’s “universal project of becoming human” (Schroeder 568). These projects are related, insofar as the basis of aesthetic judgment in each depends on the cultivation of a faculty described by Kant as “subjective universality” (161). Because beauty is not an inherent property of objects, but rather a property that arises within the subject, Kant faces the problem of dealing with the variability of individual perspective. Subjective universality, for Kant, registers “the assent of all, in spite of the fact that it is not a judgment of cognition, but only of the pleasure or displeasure in a given object, i.e., a presumption of a subjective purposiveness that is throughout valid for everyone, which is not supposed to be grounded in any concept of the thing, because it is a judgment of taste” (161). The realization of a world in which such judgments can be made necessarily implicates the global inculcation of western conceptions of beauty, a project, which, in a world containing nonwestern peoples, tacitly endorses colonialism. As I will show in my analysis of “‘Its Wavering Image,’” it is this process of inculcation—infused with an attendant pedagogy of white supremacy—that Far’s work critiques and subverts.
Far’s concern with the racializing aesthetics of the white gaze, described in “Leaves” as a failure “to see clearly and hear distinctly” can be witnessed in other areas of her journalistic writing (125). In “Half Chinese Children” (1895), for example, Far intimates the way racism corrupts one’s aesthetic faculties. After noting that some mixed children can pass for white, “a person who has been informed of the child’s parentage notices at once a peculiar cast about the face. This cast is over the face of every child who has a drop of Chinese blood in its veins” (Becoming 54). While Far utilizes the language of ethnography here, she subtly signals that it is the knowledge of racial difference that transforms perception. Only after one “has been informed” of the child’s “drop of Chinese blood” does the “peculiar cast” of her face become visible. In an 1896 letter to the editor of the Montreal Star, Far articulated her aesthetic theory of racism even more distinctly. “I believe the chief reason for the prejudice against the Chinese . . . is that they are not considered good looking by white men” (“A Plea for the Chinaman” Becoming 90). With this statement, Far underlines one of the basic ideological premises of racism, observing that—in a patriarchal society—the aesthetic judgments of men become naturalized and produce structures of racialized inequity. At the core of racism, for Sui Sin Far, is a colonizing aesthetics. “That the Chinese do not please our artistic taste,” she states, “Is really at the root of all the evil there, and from it springs the other objections to the Chinese” (90). It is this standpoint that informs her fiction—almost all of which centralizes racial antagonism—and it is with this theoretical principle in mind that we must address her cosmopolitanism.

By designating the Chinatown streets “unbeautiful,” Mark Carson dramatizes Far’s theory of racism *qua* white masculine aesthetics. Intimately connected to Carson’s
binaristic formulation of beautiful/unbeautiful is a political idea of belonging. In his rejoinder to Pan’s identification of Chinatown as home, he says, “You do not belong here. You are white—white” (82). Through this exchange, Far articulates what Jacques Rancière has referred to as the aesthetics “at the core of politics,” insofar as “politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time” (The Politics of Aesthetics 13). After Pan protests—crying “No! no!”—Carson explains his logic. “Your real self is alien to them [the Chinese]. What interest have they in the books you read—the thoughts you think?” (82). The decision Carson imposes on Pan is a choice between these two things: “Pan,” he says, “Don’t you see that you have got to decide what you will be—Chinese or white? You cannot be both” (83).

The choice that Carson demands of Pan has always been read as critical to the story’s meaning, which, at one level, strongly suggests Far’s repudiation of racial binaries. What has yet to be observed, however, is the connection between Pan’s turn to Chinese identity and the Pan-Pacific Movement, which was just emerging at the time of the story’s publication. This connection turns on Far’s naming of her protagonist, “Pan.” By naming the story’s protagonist “Pan,” I contend, Far gestures to the Pan-Pacific discourse I have just analyzed as a manifestation of Pacific imminence. A transliteration of a common Chinese surname, the word “Pan” nevertheless carries English associations, as a prefix, with the concept of universalism. Defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “forming terms relating to the whole of the universe or mankind, or denoting that the second element exists or operates at a universal level,” this prefix was beginning to find
rhetorical currency at the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{161} With her cosmopolitan hopes for the world’s future well established in “Leaves,” it is likely Far would have taken notice of such events as the first Pan-American Conference, held between October 1899 and April 1890; the first Pan-African Congress, held in London in 1900; \textit{and} the Pan-Pacific Movement through \textit{Mid-Pacific Magazine}, which began printing in San Francisco (and other Pacific locales) in January of 1911. Reinforcing this reading of “Pan” is Far’s use of the same name for a character in a similarly themed story from \textit{Mrs. Spring Fragrance}. In “Pat and Pan,” one of the collection’s “Tales of Chinese Children,” Far produces another narrative of frustrated cosmopolitanism.

Less commonly discussed than “‘Its Wavering Image,’” I read “Pat and Pan” as a companion story to the former, given that it explores the theme of enforced racial and cultural choice but divides Eurasian identity into two distinct halves. “Pat and Pan” tells the story of two children, a Chinese girl named Pan and a white boy named Pat, who are discovered by a white missionary woman, sleeping in one another’s arms in the entrance of a Chinatown joss house. “They lay there . . . sound asleep in each other’s arms,” the narrator relates, “Her tiny face was hidden upon his bosom and his white, upturned chin rested upon her black, rosetted head” (211). As Kimberly Macellaro observes, Far’s arrangement of the two children “can be read visually as a yin-yang, a Chinese symbol that interconnects two seemingly antithetical elements” (61). The complementarity of the interracial siblings Pan and Pat—the latter is the orphaned son of a white woman nursed in her final days by Pan’s parents—is therefore implied from the beginning. It is only with the intervention of the white “Mission woman,” Anna Harrison, that their bond

\textsuperscript{161} The \textit{OED} dates the earliest mention of the term “Pan-American” to 1879.
begins to fissure (“Pat and Pan” 212). Again, Far’s criticism of white Missionary activities appears.

Anna Harrison soon sets up a school, where she is determined to educate Pat, who does not speak English, to learn his “mother tongue,” believing that “for a white boy to grow up as a Chinese was unthinkable” (213). Eventually, Pat, who was raised by Pan’s parents and is considered one of their own children, is adopted, through the Mission’s intervention, by a “comfortably off American” couple (216). At their separation, Pat tearfully cries out, “I am Chinese too!” (216). Near the end of the story, Pat and Pan chance to meet. Pat has begun attending “the big school,” which he does not like but where, he tells Pan, he “learn[s] lots of things that you don’t know anything about” (216). By their next meeting, Pat—surrounded by a group of white schoolboys—rejects Pan, shouting “Get away from me!” (217). While the Pan of “Pat and Pan” is not a mixed-race, Eurasian figure, her ability to see Pat as Chinese—a member of her own community—indexes Far’s conception of cosmopolitan aesthetics. Nevertheless, this ability to “see clearly and hear distinctly” is ultimately frustrated, as it is in “‘Its Wavering Image,’” by the racializing aesthetics of white supremacy. Hence, when Pan laments that Pat is “Chinese no more,” Far’s story invites us to locate the story’s tragedy not so much in Pat’s divestment of Chineseness as in the demise of an actually existing cosmopolitanism manifest through interracial siblinghood.

In “Pat and Pan,” the agent of this demise is an education in white supremacy. In “‘Its Wavering Image,’” cosmopolitanism is stymied by different, though related, forms of inculcation and knowledge-making. As I will argue, Far’s story also problematizes the project of cosmopolitanism through an allegory of reading that operates by manipulating
textual meaning through regional juxtaposition. If, by turning Chinatown’s culture into a salacious text for racist consumption, Mark Carson pulls texts out of context to further white supremacist ends, Far uses textual allusion and irony to re-contextualize works by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Robert Louis Stevenson—established, male literary figures—to appropriate white, male literary culture to a critique of cosmopolitanisms anchored to a false universalism.

Until very recently, scholars never attended to the textual allusions of “Its Wavering Image.” However, as I will demonstrate, an appreciation of Far’s story as transpacific regionalism relies on re-constructing and theorizing the critical ramifications of the literary network it constructs. As Edward Whitley has recently observed, “a networked literary history” of the kind I undertake here is necessarily “an archive-rich literary history insofar as an interconnected web of texts and authors demands a full accounting of the documents and historical agents who might otherwise appear peripheral to the lineal progression of time” (288). Such a reading presents an alternative understanding of Far, who has long been characterized as the “foremother” of Asian American literature, as a Eurasian, cosmopolitan writer who intervenes in a spatially-oriented literary tradition unfolding in her own time (Howard 145). By conducting a closer reading of Far’s literary allusions than has heretofore been attempted, I illustrate how Far crafts a sophisticated meta-textual manipulation of canonical literary figures that uncouples universalist pretension from white supremacist pedagogy.

As June Howard first observed in 2008, the title phrase comes from the end of Longfellow’s poem “The Bridge” (1845). The last two stanzas of this poem are sung by
Carson during the scene on the roof of Man You’s shop. They fixate on an image of the moon and its reflection.

\[
\text{And forever and forever,} \\
\text{As long as the river flows,} \\
\text{As long as the heart has passions,} \\
\text{As long as life has woes,} \\
\text{The moon and its broken reflection} \\
\text{And its shadows shall appear,} \\
\text{As the symbol of love in heaven,} \\
\text{And its wavering image here. (Longfellow 61)}
\]

Intoned in Carson’s “irresistible voice,” this fragmentary song causes Pan to break into tears (83). Carson takes great pleasure in this affective display, exclaiming, “Oh, Pan! Pan! Those tears prove that you are white” (83). As Howard rightly observes, Carson’s use of the poem to seduce Pan entails a patent misreading of the poem’s meaning (155). The poem, aptly described by Howard as an expression of “enduring devotion, in the context of spiritual values, and it culminates in a sense of compassion for all humankind,” was based on Longfellow’s personal experience of crossing a bridge on the Charles River during the seven-year courtship of his second wife, Fanny Appleton (157). Such an interpretation is also supported by Longfellow’s inclusion of a stanza linking his experience of emotional anguish to the “many thousands / of care-encumbered men” who have also crossed the bridge, most of the poem is spent exploring the speaker’s own burden (lines 45-46).
While I agree with Howard’s assessment of the poem as articulating a “sense of compassion for all humankind,” I contend that Far uses “The Bridge” to highlight the physical situation of the poem’s speaker, who, standing on a bridge at midnight, speaks of “the burden laid upon me” that “seemed greater than I could bear” (Longfellow 35-36). That Far should select a poem called “The Bridge”—a symbol of connection and liminality—evokes her account of the Eurasian, in 1909, as bearing a burdensome “cross” and occupying a precarious position as the “connecting link” between two races. The significance of this connection is enhanced if one reads Pan’s reaction to the poem as one of recognition. Critics have long assumed that Pan’s tears respond to the beauty of the poem’s final lines or by the beauty of Carson’s voice, but, as I will argue below, it is more probable that she is moved by the hearing of a familiar and beloved text. Reading “The Bridge” as a familiar poem grants Pan’s character, who is considered an “unusually bright girl” with a sharp eye for observation and storytelling, a greater emotional complexity (81). Additionally, it gives Far more credit as a realist, since it does not interpret Pan as a stock character from the sentimental tradition—a woman who sheds tears at the mere sound of a pleasing tune. Most importantly, however, it builds from the detail of Pan’s literariness, suggested by Carson’s statement that the people of Chinatown “do not understand” her “real self,” in part, because they have no interest in “the books [she] read[s]” (82).

I base my reinterpretation of this crucial scene on the existence of an earlier story, entitled “Her Burden,” which critics of Far have never examined. Published in at least three newspapers—the Kalamazoo Gazette, the Idaho Register, and the Jacksonian (Heber Springs, Arkansas) in the years 1893 and 1894, this anonymous work of fiction (a
sketch in two short columns) presents an early model for the regionalist appropriation of
Longfellow’s poem Far undertakes in “‘Its Wavering Image.’” Indeed, it contains
numerous similarities to Far’s later text. “Her Burden” opens with an epigraph
reproducing the ninth stanza of Longfellows “The Bridge.” It reads: “For my heart was
hot and restless, / And my life was full of care, / And the burden laid upon me / Seemed
greater than I could bear” (33-36). Its narrative concerns a young woman from the South,
the puritanically-named Constance Faithful, who, in true sentimental fashion, falls in love
with a Northern journalist named Harold Burgoyne through correspondence. Their
meeting is described as “the meeting of twin souls—hearts that were mates—in a love too
pure for earth,” but before long Burgoyne—whose name “was upon every lip”—must
return North to advance his career (6). He continues to write back to Constance, who
waits for him—faithfully—though she suffers greatly. Months pass, when Constance
receives “a letter from the far off North . . . signed by a woman’s name—which simply
broke her heart” (6). It reveals, or at least claims, “that old Burgoyne had other ties; that
there was one in the great Northern metropolis to whom he was betrothed” (6). To
accentuate Constance’s heartbreak and despair, the narrator alters two lines from
Longfellow found at the beginning of the poem: “And the burden laid upon her / seemed
greater than she could bear” (“Her Burden” 6). The story ends with Burgoyne excitedly
telegraphing Constance that he will be returning home. In reply, he receives word that
“Constance died an hour ago. Her last words were: ‘Harold—Good-by’” (6). The story
ends with the final two stanzas of “The Bridge”—the same lines that Mark Carson sings
to Pan in “‘Its Wavering Image.’”
While it may be impossible to verify Far’s familiarity with “Her Burden,” the correspondences between this text and her later, more sophisticated work, are many. Besides its integral use of Longfellow’s “The Bridge,” “Her Burden” portrays two lovers from different regional spaces, Harold Burgoyne’s profession as an obsessed journalist, and an implication of betrayal. Its protagonist, Constance Faithful, also resembles Far’s self-portrayal given that her deep emotional sensitivity is linked to physical decline and, ultimately, death.\(^\text{162}\) As the narrator states, “He [Burgoyne] loved her with all his heart, but he did not understand this woman’s nature, its warmth, and sensitiveness, its depths of intensity and despair” (6). As a well-traveled woman who published in journals and newspapers around the country, Far may have encountered the story. In 1893, however, she was living in Montreal, where her published work appeared in venues such as the \textit{Daily Star} until late 1896.\(^\text{163}\) A more intriguing possibility is that Far could have written this anonymous story herself. As Mary Chapman notes, Far’s known oeuvre now stands at “over 260 texts, demonstrat[ing] that she was far more prolific than previously believed” (xx). This represents more than a ten-fold increase on what was attributed to her by S.E. Solberg, an early Far scholar, in 1981.\(^\text{164}\) Chapman adds that, “between 1888 and her death in 1914, Eaton [Far] published in almost \textit{sixty} Canadian, US, and Jamaican magazines and newspapers for diverse readerships” (xxi, emphasis mine). With this rapidly expanding archive in mind, I would argue that the question of Far’s authorship is

\(^{162}\) The use of the name “Constance Faithful” also resonates with Far’s use of the name “Pan,” whose universalist connotations I have earlier described.

\(^{163}\) In her article for the \textit{Boston Globe}, Far writes that she arrived in Jamaica—where she worked as a newspaper reporter—in her “27th year” (“Sui Sin Far” 292). Given that she was born in 1865, the year would have been 1892. However, her publication history suggests, and scholars agree, that she moved to Jamaica in 1896.

\(^{164}\) Solberg identified “twenty-two works of fiction, including five stories that had appeared in periodicals before being re-printed in \textit{Mrs. Spring Fragrance}, and several works of ethnographic journalism” (Chapman xix).
not inconceivable. In addition to similarities I have already mentioned, the form of the story—a brief sketch with stylistic links to the sentimental tradition—resembles Far’s work.

Still, “Her Burden” contains nothing of the racial themes that we know understand as a central feature of Sui Sin Far’s literary career. Regardless, its fixation on Longfellow’s word “burden”—the lexical unit from which the entire narrative is, in fact, constructed—allows us to historicize Far’s Progressive Era-reading of the poem. It illustrates that readers of her period would have understood the poem highlighting the position of the lyric speaker (whose emotional anguish constitutes the prevailing theme of the poem), rather than the image of the moon, which, as I will argue, is—in “‘Its Wavering Image’”—indicative of Mark Carson’s inconstancy. If we interpret Pan’s tears as linked to her identification with the speaker in Longfellow’s poem, rather than the beauty of Carson’s performance, “The Bridge” serves to highlight her burgeoning sense of betweeness.

However, Far’s use of a poem by Longfellow—a figure whose contemporary canonicity is fast eroding—requires additional, geopolitical contextualization. Although Longfellow’s decline in popularity began declining after his death, he remained an important literary institution whose works and image were deployed in service of U.S. imperialism in the Pacific. To glimpse Longfellow’s instrumentalization in U.S. colonial space, it is useful to turn to Genevieve Taggard’s remarkable memoir article “Hiawatha in Hawaii” (1929). Reflecting on her time as an eighteen-year-old, fourth-grade teacher in

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165 It is worth pointing out that “The Bridge” was reprinted in an August 1912 edition of the Kansas City Star, around the same time Mrs. Spring Fragrance was published. This suggests that Longfellow’s poem had re-entered the public circulation during the Progressive years.
1906, Taggard’s story centers on two of her favorite students, a Chinese-Hawaiian boy named Ah Pau and a Chinese boy named Ah Hop. Taggard recalls how she was once “command[ed]” by the Hawaiian “Department of Public Instruction” to give a holiday play at her school for the benefit of the Molokai Leper Settlement. The play was to be a dramatization of Longfellow’s “The Song of Hiawatha” (1855) (503). Ambivalent about her position vis-à-vis the Department (it is notable that Taggard became a poet and socialist in later life), Taggard recounts a humorous story that finds the two boys exemplifying the uneven effects of the Americanizing project in Hawai‘i.

Taggard tells Ah Pau and Ah Hop—who are both troublemakers—that whoever is best behaved will receive the starring role of Hiawatha. Unable to contain himself, Ah Pau releases “a pocketful of grasshoppers” in the classroom and Ah Hop wins the role (503). However, despite his desire to play the role of Hiawatha, Ah Hop tells Taggard that he cannot take the role: his father needs him to watch over the rice-fields. Ah Pau assumes the role and lords it over Ah Hop. He plays the role admirably, but not before secretly knocking the nose off the bust of Longfellow. Ah Pau, it is later revealed, actually surrenders the role of Hiawatha because he feels unworthy. Teased by his rival, he catches himself swearing—an act “the missionaries” have constructed as a “cardinal sin”—and, as he tells Taggard, “Hiawatha never swear” (503). As Taggard’s story succinctly exhibits, Longfellow and his poem—which itself disciplines the native Ojibwe trickster figure Manabozho into the noble savage figure of Hiawatha (a name drawn from Iroquois, not Ojibwe tradition)—were utilized in the service of U.S. colonial enterprise in the Pacific during the Progressive Era. As a document of literary contestation, then, it provides an important historical point of resonance to which Far’s fictional work
connects as part of a neglected transpacific network. More specifically, it allows us to read the latter’s work in light of broader, translocal practices of white-directed education in U.S. colonial and exclusionary spaces (by missionaries, government bureaucracies, and reluctant teenage schoolteachers like Taggard).  

Hence, by titling her story “‘Its Wavering Image’” Far accentuates not only the inconstancy of love, but also the way an imperial education in white superiority misdirects a wavering humanist vision to suit its racializing ends. By repurposing Longfellow’s poem as a song of seduction and an aesthetic test of whiteness, Mark Carson exemplifies this latter practice. Crucially, what Carson elides from “The Bridge,” a lyric poem focused on interiority, is the very subjectivity it explores. Carson’s object of focus is the lustrous moon and its reflection, but the poem is not named “the Moon.” Part of the irony of Far’s story turns on failure to see that his fixation on whiteness has sparked an internal conflict in the woman he claims to love. As with the missionaries who inculcate whiteness in “Pat and Pan,” the narrator of “‘Its Wavering Image’” states, “it was only after the coming of Mark Carson that the mystery of [Pan’s] nature began to trouble her” (80).

When Pan reads Carson’s story in the newspaper and realizes his betrayal, Far renders the scene in short, vivid sentences. “Someone had hurt her. Who was it? She raised her eyes. There shone: ‘Its Wavering Image.’ It helped her to lucidity. He had done it” (84). Inviting the reader back to intertextual contemplation, Far artfully conjures an image of Pan’s eyes, which now reflect the moon. In this moment, Pan’s position resembles that of Longfellow’s anguished speaker in “the Bridge.” At the same time, the  

\[166\] The character of Taggard’s memoir recalls Far’s the racializing educations of “Pat and Pan.”
“wavering image” of the moon in Pan’s eyes writes the object of contemplation onto the subject’s very body, suggesting its internalization. Beginning the story as a “Bohemian, exempt from the conventional restrictions imposed upon either the white or Chinese woman,” Pan gains a new burden of “lucidity,” coming to grips with a racist order she can no longer ignore (81). As a figure of cosmopolitan potential, Pan, the “connecting link” between cultures that Carson exploits, ultimately burns the bridge between herself and whiteness and takes refuge in the close-knit society of her ghettoized Chinese community.

Hence, in “‘Its Wavering Image,’” Far re-routes Longfellow’s poem as a false universal tool of U.S. imperial pedagogy and the related discourse of white supremacy. Appropriating “The Bridge,” she regionalizes its meaning, directing it through a textual web that links San Francisco’s exclusion-era Chinatown with the contemporaneous project of Americanization in the newly annexed Territory of Hawai‘i. In other words, she articulates a critique of Pacific imminence—an emergent discourse of bad faith cosmopolitanism resonant in the Pacific coastal regions where she spent much of her career—through a transpacific literary network that registers its propagandistic elision of racial subjugation. Yet, there is another important node to this network I have yet to broach: the distant islands of Samoa.

At the center of Far’s critique of Pacific imminence is a realist impulse to represent things as they are. This disposition comes across clearly in the text’s final literary allusion to the work of Stevenson. After Carson publishes his story on Chinatown, he leaves San Francisco on assignment for two months. He writes Pan, telling her this, but she never responds. When he returns to the city, he makes his way to see
Pan, but a sense of guilt he cannot define assails him. He then turns into Portsmouth Square and sits near a memorial to Robert Louis Stevenson. He asks himself why Pan failed to respond to him. At this point, Far transitions from free indirect style to third-person omniscient commentary: “Would Robert Louis Stevenson have known why? Yes—and so did Mark Carson. But though Robert Louis Stevenson would have boldly answered himself the question, Mark Carson thrust it aside, arose, and pressed up the hill” (85). Underlining Far’s interest in “boldly answer[ing]” life’s difficult questions, this moment also installs Stevenson as a kind of literary conscience. Avoiding moral didacticism, Far again articulates her critique of cosmopolitanism with localizing appropriations of the western literary canon. In her insightful article on “‘Its Wavering Image,’” Kimberly Macellaro rightly emphasizes the materiality of the Stevenson memorial, which serves as a device of cultural hegemony used to “contribut[e] to the cosmopolitan appeal of San Francisco’s Chinatown as a white tourist attraction” (55). However, her observation that “Stevenson’s ethnographic depictions of Chinatown in Silverado Squatters (1883) and The Amateur Emigrant (1895) conform to the dominant Orientalist narrative” leads her to read Far’s narrative as “linking Carson to Stevenson” (55-56). The problem with this reading is that, despite Stevenson’s Orientalist acts, Far characterization of Stevenson as a bold realist strikes a strong note of approval. For this reason, I read Far’s use of Stevenson as another instance of her re-appropriating a canonical, white literary figure from its universalizing co-optation by American imperialist institutions (such as the San Francisco government).

167 Stevenson moved to San Francisco in 1879, where he had followed Fanny Vandegrift Osbourne, the woman he would marry in 1880.
As Macellaro points out, there is some resonance between Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and the binaristic thought of Mark Carson. Emphasizing this link, her work pushes back against the common viewpoint that Far’s story endorses biraciality and “shifts the focus from Pan’s racial identity crisis to Mark Carson’s white masculine anxieties about race, which are projected onto Pan” (65). However, to read the story as focused on Carson and his whiteness is, I argue, to decenter Pan, a Eurasian figure that reflects Far’s career-long exploration of mixed-race subjectivity. For this reason, I read Far’s reference to Stevenson not as a window into Carson’s white masculine fragility, but as part of a transpacific regional critique that returns to Pan-Pacific discourse one of its own aporias in and through the intimacy of miscegenation.

Near the end of his life, an ailing Stevenson moved, with his wife, to Samoa. There he published several works on the South Pacific, including works of fiction.168 Among these is *The Beach of Falesā* (1892-93), set on a fictional island that bears resemblance to Samoa.169 A adventure story that centers miscegenation and a critique of imperialism. The protagonist, Wiltshire, arrives on the island to assume a trading post. As Vanessa Smith observes, “Like Stevenson making his first ‘island landfall’ in *In the South Seas* [a travelogue],” Wiltshire comes to the island “in need of recuperation, but his illness is diagnosed as the lack of white society” (170). However, as the story progresses, Wiltshire discovers that the other traders are mostly his enemies. The story’s villain, an

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168 Far may have considered Stevenson something of a kindred spirit, given that the latter also suffered from poor health throughout his life.
169 The text was printed in the _ magazine and then published in _ in 1893. The text was censored and heavily edited by the publishers. Menikoff has argued that this represses Stevenson’s critique of colonialism, which, even in the edited version that late nineteenth-century readers like Far might have encountered, this critique comes through.
island trader named Case, has driven off or killed several other traders. In an effort to do the same to Wiltshire, Case facilitates the former’s marriage to a local Samoan woman named Uma, who has been tabooed for reasons pertaining to a broken engagement with a local chief. The taboo undermines Wiltshire’s ability to trade in copra and he realizes that Case has duped him. Eventually, Case is revealed as a deft manipulator who practices legerdemain around the natives and builds an elaborate, sensationalistic temple to keep them in thrall. Collaborating with Uma, Wiltshire forms an alliance with a native chief and ends up killing Case in a dramatic fight scene.

While *The Beach of Falesā* is an adventure story, it also represents Stevenson’s effort to produce a realist narrative of the South Pacific. Stevenson characterized the novella as “the first realistic South Sea story” (169). At the heart of this realist concern, I contend, is the story’s handling of miscegenation. While the adventure plot concerns Wiltshire’s battle against Case, his ability to survive on the island is closely linked to his relationship with Uma, who he very quickly comes to love. Repeatedly, Wiltshire expresses his shame in not being properly wed to Uma and at the first opportunity, they are re-married by an English missionary. Stevenson’s interest in the miscegenation plot of his story is evidenced by the fact that, after Case is defeated, Wiltshire concludes his tale with direct consideration on his mixed-race children. His comments cast light on a major stumbling block to the cosmopolitan world of mixed-race people Far alludes to in “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian.” Abandoning his original plan to establish a pub in England, Wiltshire reflects,

> I’m stuck here, I fancy. I don’t like to leave the kids, you see: and—there’s no use talking—they’re better here than what they would be in a
white man’s country, though Ben took the eldest up to Auckland, where
he’s being schooled with the best. But what bothers me is the girls.
They’re only half-castes, of course; I know that as well as you do, and
there’s nobody thinks less of half-castes than I do; but they’re mine, and
about all I’ve got. I can’t reconcile my mind to their taking up with
Kanakas, and I’d like to know where I’m to find the whites? (125-26)

It is important to recognize that Stevenson presents his story through Wiltshire’s
perspective. He very deliberately characterizes Wiltshire as a working-class Englishman
whose inculcation with white supremacist logic continually clashes with his love for Uma
and his mixed-race children. It is this situation that Stevenson’s realism lays bare. While
Wiltshire seems to care for his children, he remains in thrall to a worldview that
disparages them as “half-castes.” By ending the story in this way, however, Stevenson
highlights Wiltshire’s commitment to them even in the face of this.

Reading Far’s allusive story as transpacific regionalism, that is, routed through
Stevenson’s South Pacific tale highlights an emergent modernist sensibility in her work
and traces a form of intimacy Lowe describes as “the implied but less visible forms of
alliance, affinity, and society among variously colonized peoples beyond the metropolitan
center” (19). By valorizing Stevenson’s “bold[ness]” in addressing the harsh realities of
miscegenation in the late nineteenth century, Far also denigrates Carson’s willful
disregard of the same. Unwilling to embrace Pan as a “bridge” between peoples divided
by a system of colonial oppression, he insistently pushes whiteness upon her. Whereas
Carson hopes to extricate Pan from Chinatown and deracinate her, Wiltshire knowingly
immerses himself in another regional Pacific community. Although The Beach of Falesā
does not foreground the political project of cosmopolitanism, it is notable that Stevenson names Wiltshire’s wife “Uma.” As Smith points out, Uma “initially stands out among the ‘Kanakas’ of Falesā simply as the object of Wiltshire’s voyeuristic sexual appraisal, but who forces her husband to recognise the integral humanity which is signaled by her own name (‘Uma’ is the core of the word human; in Samoan the word signifies wholeness and completeness)” (173). Through this naming practice, Stevenson suggests that universalism is accessed through miscegenation. Such an idea may have elicited Far’s interest, who, as I have discussed, attaches cosmopolitan connotations to her protagonist by way of the name “Pan.”

In “Its Wavering Image,” then, the doubled figure of the Eurasian woman—as represented by Pan and Sui Sin Far herself—responds to willful misreadings of her cosmopolitan potential by disrupting reading practices that serve to inculcate white dominance. By placing the white canonical works and images of Longfellow and Robert Louis Stevenson into a transpacific network within her story, Far’s work itself resists the imperial cosmopolitan network of the Pan-Pacific Movement being articulated through the transpacific print culture of the Progressive Era.
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