ANTICIPATING 1898: WRITINGS OF U.S. EMPIRE
ON PUERTO RICO, CUBA, THE PHILIPPINES, AND HAWAI’I

DISSERTATION

by

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This dissertation argues for a re-periodization of 1898 as the moment of U.S. empire by utilizing a transhemispheric methodology that discursively connects the Pacific and the Americas. Arguing that the federal campaign of Indian Removal that federalized the dispossession of American Indian nations should be considered as the actual marker of intra-continental U.S. imperialism, this dissertation takes 1830 as its starting point. Within that historical context, the study examines literary texts by U.S. writers who in the 1830s anticipated the extra-continental colonial visions that would become cultural commonplaces after 1898, when the United States became an imperial nation through its acquisition of colonial possessions in the Pacific and the Spanish Caribbean. The dissertation also examines writers from those regions who proposed their own transcolonial revisions to dominant colonial discourses in the late nineteenth century.

Specifically, this dissertation examines the colonial visions articulated by two sets of New England writers who traveled to Puerto Rico and Cuba, respectively. Edward Bliss Emerson and Charles Chauncy Emerson (brothers of Ralph Waldo Emerson) visited Puerto Rico between 1831 and 1834. Almost during the same time period, Sophia Amelia Peabody (who would later become Nathaniel Hawthorne’s wife), and her sister Mary Tyler Peabody, traveled to and lived in Cuba from 1833 to 1835. The colonial
visions articulated by the Emersons and Peabodys reveal that a decade before Manifest Destiny was articulated publicly as a political ideal, the notion that the United States was fated to expand into an extra-continental empire was expressed more privately in literary and cultural terms.

Within the context of the competing imperialisms of the late nineteenth century, including a nascent U.S. empire, this dissertation further shows how writers in Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and Hawai’i deployed transcolonial strategies to challenge colonialism in their regions. This study examines texts by the Puerto Rican Ramón Emeterio Betances, the Cuban José Martí, and the Filipino José Rizal to argue that these writers were transcolonial anti-colonialists. This dissertation also juxtaposes the colonial translations of Hawai’i, written and disseminated by Mark Twain, with the anti-colonial, or indigenized translations, deployed by deposed Hawaiian Queen Lili’uokalani in her autobiography. By deploying distinct transcolonial revisions of dominant representations of their islands and their people, and by representing the United States in their own terms, these writers anticipated later anti-imperialist discourses aimed at U.S. imperialism.

Following post-national and postcolonial approaches, but also moving beyond such methods of analysis, my dissertation advocates for a broadening of our critical lens to include texts from different hemispheres, cultures, languages, and nations. This study thus expands and enriches our ability to interpret not only what John Carlos Rowe has described as “the genealogies of U.S. empire,” but also the interconnected, and simultaneous, genealogies of the national and regional revisions that transcolonially countered empire across the globe.
A LKO, por todo.
A mis padres, por su amor.
A Chad y Susan, por creer en mi.

To LKO, for all.
To my parents, for their love.
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My husband, Lance Oliver, was an unflagging copyeditor, sounding board, cheerleader, task master, and a good shoulder to cry on, or a strong hand to pick me up when I felt too tired or discouraged to continue. He made sure I never lost sight of the prize.

My parents, Juan Manuel García-Passalacqua and Ivonne Acosta Lespier, instilled in me a passion for history and literature, an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and a perfectionist streak in my personality. My mother, a historian, pointed me to the Emerson brothers, and was invaluable in locating some of the Betances texts, while my father, a cultural studies professor, recommended that I include José Rizal in my study. My mother also translated into Spanish some of Betances’ works written originally in French. Both of my parents were invaluable research assistants, and my dad not only constantly flagged important books, but he also was a willing, and enthusiastic reader. My mother also helped copy edit the final version of the dissertation.
I have an eternal debt of gratitude to my dissertation co-directors, Professors Chadwick Allen and Susan Williams, who were careful and demanding readers, and who never ceased to challenge me to produce the very best work. Early on, when I was uncertain as to what my project should be, Professor Allen provided much-needed focus and guidance. His insights were always invaluable, and he recommended important sources, such as Queen Lili’uokalani and Mark Twain. As an advisor, Professor Allen was the best, not only because his own scholarship represents the type of groundbreaking work I hope to produce, but also because he always inspired me to strive for excellence, and was unfailingly generous with his time and his advise. I owe my passion for the nineteenth century to Professor Williams, who first introduced me to the texts by the Peabody sisters, and to the intersections of postcolonial and nineteenth-century U.S. literary studies. Professor Williams also represents for me the highest scholarly and collegial standards in our field. She always kept her eyes on the forest when I was lost among the trees, she pointed me to crucial sources, and she modeled for me what it means to be a successful woman professor in our discipline. Professor Williams taught a dissertation seminar at Ohio State that was also instrumental in getting me started and on the right track toward timely completion. Together, this amazing pair made up a veritable Dream Team, being the most committed, hardworking and encouraging co-directors that any dissertating graduate student could wish for. They are both my mentors and embody the type of teacher, scholar and colleague that I strive to be.

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At Kenyon College, Marilyn Yarbrough Search Committee Co-Chairs, Professor Ted Mason and Associate Provost Ric Sheffield, were excellent guardians of my sanity, and instrumental in helping me to keep on track for timely completion. Professor Mason, the chair of the Department of English, suggested important sources, as did my eighteenth-century friends and colleagues, Professors Jim Carson and Deborah Laycock, who also shared their expertise on the gothic. Professor Janet McAdams read Chapter 4, and was unfailingly encouraging of my work. Kenyon Faculty Seminar members provided excellent comments on an article-length version of parts of Chapter 2.

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When I started the program at Ohio State in 2002, I had to take the required and dreaded “English 700: Introduction to Graduate Study,” which for me (as for most of my class mates) was an intimidating survey introduction to literary theory. To my great relief, I finished the class successfully, and in a self-reflective essay I told Professor Marlene Longenecker that I hoped someday I would “think great thoughts.” I cannot claim that this dissertation achieves that goal, but my work here certainly reflects that ambition and effort.

The theoretical and writing work herein is the product of this great community that has supported and encouraged me as I pursued this seemingly never-ending Ph.D. for the past five years. While all errors and shortcomings of the work are solely my own, any and all successes in the work are theirs, too. ¡Mil gracias!
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INTRODUCTION

REVISING 1898

In December 1983, a young Puerto Rican writer, Luis López Nieves, published a short story, “Seva: Historia de la primera invasión norteamericana de la isla de Puerto Rico ocurrida en mayo 1898” (“Seva: History of the First U.S. Invasion of the Island of Puerto Rico in May 1898”).¹ The short story, which first appeared in a weekly pro-independence newspaper, rewrites and re-imagines the 1898 U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico, recasting it in anti-colonial terms. Unlike typical historical and literary accounts, which describe how Puerto Ricans welcomed and aided their U.S. invaders, López Nieves crafts an epic narrative of resistance. He does this formally by structuring the short story as a pastiche of different extra-literary genres – letters, newspaper reports, diaries, historical documents and photographs. The story unveils as if it were the result of an investigation into the mysterious disappearance of a Puerto Rican history professor, Víctor Cabañas. His research has revealed that the first town the U.S. invaded was not Guánica in the southwest of the island on July 25, 1898, as historical records show. Instead, Cabañas has found that the United States invaded first in May through a

¹ Luis López Nieves, “Seva: Historia de la primera invasión norteamericana de la isla de Puerto Rico ocurrida en mayo” (San Juan: Editorial Cordillera, 1995).
northeastern town known as Seva, which challenged the U.S. invasion through armed resistance. The Seva inhabitants were therefore massacred, the town destroyed, literally wiped off the map, and eventually buried under a U.S. Navy base. A new town, under the similar-sounding name of Ceiba, was established near the site where Seva used to exist, so that the U.S. government could claim that anyone who remembered Seva was mistaken.

At its author’s request, “Seva” was first published without being labeled as fictional, and it caused such an uproar among Puerto Rico intellectuals, politicians, historians and analysts that the events surrounding its publication have been labeled “the Seva incident.”² Initially, the story was received as factual until the newspaper printed a clarification a week later that “Seva” was wholly fictional. During the week when it was widely believed to represent an instance of recovered history, “Seva” became a rallying cry for pro-independence supporters, and the slogan “Seva Lives!” began to appear as graffiti all over Puerto Rico.³ The governor was notified and reportedly mulled over what to do about the story’s revelations, TV and radio reporters were assigned to travel to Washington, D.C., to find the documents referred to by the disappeared professor, and there was a general outcry demanding a thorough investigation into the disappearance of Cabañas. All this must have interested López Nieves to a great degree, especially since legend has it that one politician, who demanded that the Puerto Rican government request an immediate investigation into the events at Seva, assaulted the author after he admitted


³ Ibid, 67.
that the story was fictional. In 1995, when “Seva” was reprinted, the new edition included not only the short story, but also the reports and analysis of the lore surrounding the story’s publication.

When I read “Seva,” I had just graduated from Harvard with an interdisciplinary degree in history and literature, and had begun my graduate studies there in education. I was struck by and interested in the intensity of the reactions that the story elicited, which invested it with its now-legendary status. What, I wondered, led so many people to so readily want to believe López Nieves’ rewriting of the history-making events of 1898? What was there in the power of literature, from a then-rather obscure writer, that shook the depths of the national unconscious in Puerto Rico? Why was there such seeming avidity for a counter-history that contradicted the official story about the 1898 invasion? In explaining his motivations, López Nieves said that “Seva,” described by critics as a “pseudo-literary lie,” was the result of a “profound dissatisfaction” with the history of Puerto Rico. He said the short story first occurred to him during his doctoral studies in New York in the late 1970s when he decided that because there was no anti-colonial epic known in Puerto Rico, he “only had one thing left to do: invent it.” López Nieves determined that he would “rewrite the history of Puerto Rico as it should have been, as it could have been, or as [he] would like it to be.” Because he felt that “Seva” was “an apotheosis of a Puerto Rican-ness that is alive and indocile,” López Nieves asked that the

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5 Ramos, “Crónica,” 61, 71

6 Ibid, 84
story be published without the label of fiction, and the newspaper granted his request. That is how “Seva,” the short story, became history.

While back in the 1980s I lacked the theoretical grounding to articulate the significance of “Seva,” or of the relationship between literature and history, the events surrounding the short story’s publication awoke a life-long interest in me. I sought to understand how narratives, both historical and literary, create, challenge and promote the range of subjectivities found in colonial contexts. I also became fascinated with the year 1898 as a temporal and ideological marker for both imperial and colonial identities in national and individual terms.

More than a decade after leaving Harvard, during the 1999-2000 academic year, I taught Puerto Rican history to seniors at an English-speaking high school in Puerto Rico. What would happen, I asked myself, if instead of teaching the history of Puerto Rico from the traditional point of view, I highlighted the events of anti-colonial resistance in the island’s long history? Would the Puerto Rican students in the class get a different sense of their identity as Puerto Ricans, and of where they came from as a nation? With the help of my historian mother, Ivonne Acosta, and of my father, Juan M. García-Passalacqua, who is a cultural studies professor, I designed a syllabus that had no textbook but used primary sources and literature (including “Seva”) to guide discussion. The students and I focused our study on how the indigenous Tainos led a war to the death against the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, on how the African slaves rebelled against their enslavers so frequently that a Draconian “black code” was imposed on the island in the nineteenth century, and on how the criollos (the mixed-blood creoles) waged
centuries-old struggles for autonomy and sovereignty both under Spanish and U.S. domination. Unlike López Nieves, I did not invent anything. I simply highlighted historical events that had been catalogued as “minor” in most traditional historical accounts of the island’s past. The results were eye-opening: a number of Puerto Rican students in the class remarked on how little they knew about that side of their history, and were intrigued by how it clearly contradicted the official story of Puerto Ricans as happy, complicit colonials throughout their five hundred years of colonial subjugation. What I discovered through the research I did to prepare that class, and through the experience of teaching it, was that while there may not have been a town called Seva that was actually buried, an entire aspect of Puerto Rican history – the side of anti-colonial resistance – had been effectively erased or downplayed.

A few years later, when I left high school teaching to pursue a doctoral degree in English at the Ohio State University, I began to explore my long-standing interest. I enrolled in a postcolonial theory class with Professor Chadwick Allen and learned that my concerns had a name: discourse theory, which explains how systems of knowledge (history and literature, for instance) create, promote, naturalize, and challenge dominant ideologies. Professor Allen’s non-traditional approach to postcolonial studies, which focused on indigenous texts from American Indian, Native Hawaiian and Maori writers, further exposed me to the analytical limitations of orthodox postcolonial theories. In one of Professor Allen’s classes, I first read and analyzed deposed Hawaiian Queen Lili’uokalani’s autobiography, Hawai’i’s Story by Hawai’i’s Queen, which became one of the main texts of this project. Postcolonial theory classes also introduced me to the
language and the theoretical frameworks that allowed me to categorize and understand what I had intuited after “the Seva incident.” This knowledge helped me frame an intellectual purpose: to contribute to unearthing, like López Nieves’ fictional researcher, the ways in which the Puerto Rican colonial subjectivity was constructed, promoted, cemented, and subverted prior to and during the time of U.S. domination that began in 1898.

My background in education led me to initially focus my research on the colonial narratives crafted and promoted by the first history textbooks on Puerto Rico, which were produced and disseminated by the U.S. government in the island’s public schools, and were in use well into the 1950s and 1960s. But once I became a doctoral candidate and began to design my dissertation project, Professor Allen, who had become my advisor, suggested that instead of focusing solely on Puerto Rico, my study should take a broader view that juxtaposed and cross-examined the U.S. colonial experiences in the Caribbean and the Pacific. What connections could be gleaned from the ways the U.S. colonial project functioned in different parts of the world and upon different cultures, languages, races and nationalities? What differences existed in the ways in which the U.S. colonial project was promoted and resisted in these areas? How did writers in these regions react to, challenge, or participate in the discourses produced in the United States about their nations? These became the major questions I wanted to answer. But while I originally intended to explore the period beginning with 1898 into the first half of the twentieth century, two classes in U.S. literature not only broadened my intellectual world, but also shifted the focus of my dissertation project.
In her nineteenth-century U.S. literature classes, Professor Susan Williams, who later became the co-director of this dissertation, explores canonical works, including Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, and Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* through an historicist approach. She also utilizes both traditional and non-traditional theoretical lenses, including post-nationalist and transnational approaches, to achieve a cultural analysis that situates the text within its historical context. Her classes enabled me to perceive important, and surprisingly mostly unexplored, connections between postcolonial theory, U.S. nation-formation and identity, and the start of U.S. imperialist expansion in the nineteenth century. My decision to use 1898 as an ending, rather than as a starting point, continued to solidify after I took a class in early U.S. literature with Professor Jared Gardner, which introduced me to key U.S. nation-building concepts and texts, such as John Winthrop’s notion of the “city on a hill,” J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer*, and Phyllis Wheatley’s neo-classical poetry about a slave’s perspective. In that class, I realized that the United States had started to conceive of itself as a nation-empire even before it was constituted as a nation-state. I also learned how deeply invested U.S. national identity was in its differentiation from racial and national “Others,” such as American Indians and African Americans. By the time I submitted my dissertation prospectus, I wanted my work to contribute to the field of post-nationalist studies on nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism. With this ambition in mind, my project changed shape a few times until it achieved its current structure, which contributes to charting what John Carlos Rowe calls
the “imperial heritage of the United States” through transhemispheric, transcultural, and transcolonial lenses.⁷

**Methodology and texts**

This project is transhemispheric because it looks beyond the American hemisphere toward the Pacific; it is transcultural not only because it includes writers from the United States, the Spanish Caribbean, the Philippines and Hawai’i, but also because it considers texts originally written in English, Spanish, and French; and, finally, it is transcolonial because it examines the simultaneity of experiences among writers who wrote within the context of competing imperialisms in the late nineteenth century. In the field of U.S. literary studies, my dissertation contributes to charting what the New Americanists have referred to as “the cultures of U.S. imperialism.”⁸ But this study goes beyond existing scholarship because it looks beyond the U.S. nation and the American hemisphere at the same time that it includes other national and regional world views. Further, this dissertation challenges the still-dominant notion that 1898 marks the beginning of U.S. empire, suggesting instead that this “moment” should be located in 1830 when the federal government approved and implemented the Indian Removal Act, which gave the president the power to remove all tribes east of the Mississippi.⁹ As I

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⁹ For a history of federal policy toward American Indian nations, see David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Politics and the American Political System* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).
discuss more fully below, 1830 signaled the federal government’s commitment to U.S. imperial intra-continental expansion, and paved the way for extra-continental imperialism (not coincidentally, many of the so-called “Indian Fighters” also fought in the Spanish-American War). 10 By using 1830 as a departure point, I show how U.S. extra-continental colonial discourses are identifiable at the time when intra-continental imperial expansion becomes a federal goal. 11 Further, my dissertation demonstrates that these discourses are recognizable more than a decade before 1848, when the United States acquired half of the Mexican territory, a year that other Americanist scholars have suggested should supplant 1898 as the marker for U.S. empire.

With 1830 as my historical starting point, I began to determine the scope of the project. To narrow the focus, I chose to study the four major archipelagos and island territories that the United States acquired as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898: Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and Hawai‘i. I initially considered including the island of Guam, but in order to achieve the juxtaposition of texts that I was interested in, I decided to limit myself to the major islands. Although the Hawaiian Islands were not colonies of Spain when they were annexed by the United States in August 1898, it

10 On September 4, 1886, Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles – who invaded Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898 – had accepted the formal surrender of the Chiricahua Chief Goyahkla (known as Geronimo), who had fought U.S. and Mexican troops since 1858. For more on Miles’ career, see Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb E. Washburn, Indian Wars (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 286-87. See also Ivonne Acosta, “Nelson Miles, asesino de indios,” El Grito de Vieques (San Juan, PR: Cultural, 2002); and Jerome A. Greene, Yellowstone Command: Colonel Nelson A. Miles and the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

11 I prefer to use the terms extra-continental and intra-continental, rather than extra-territorial or extra-national because the latter terms naturalize the territory within U.S. borders as available for expansion, thereby eliding the fact that the dispossession of American Indian nations was an act of colonialism, whether or not it was intra-territorial or intra-national.
was the impetus of the Spanish-American War (April to December 1898) that propelled their annexation. Once the breadth was determined, I chose a structure that would allow me to do comparative work not only within chapters, but also throughout the dissertation by juxtaposing different transhemispheric colonial and anti-colonial discourses. Although my project takes as its foundation the opposition between the colonial and the anti-colonial, the following chapters reveal the reductiveness of this binary. This study instead illuminates the dialectical relationship of these so-called oppositions, which co-exist and interrelate among texts, and sometimes even within the same text.

Because a transhemispheric project is by necessity comparative, my methodology is greatly influenced by Edward W. Said’s concept of the contrapuntal reading, one that counterpoises dominant and resistant texts to obtain a fuller understanding of how culture operates within the context of imperialism. However, my project expands on Said’s framework by considering not only after-the-fact resistance to U.S. colonialism, but also how specific writers anticipated the moment of U.S. empire from both the dominant and counter-dominant perspectives. My study also considers how colonial and anti-colonial discourses are found in both the writings of the colonizer and those of the colonized.

When I began to identify primary texts for my dissertation, my historian mother pointed me to the letters of Edward Bliss Emerson and Charles Chauncy Emerson, brothers of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who were in Puerto Rico during the early 1830s. Professor Williams suggested that I look into Sophia Peabody’s *Cuba Journal* and Mary Peabody Mann’s *Juanita: A Romance of Real Life in Cuba Fifty Years Ago*. Both texts were based

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on the sisters’ experiences in Cuba during nearly the same time that the Emursors were in Puerto Rico. My enthusiasm for the project grew as I realized not only that no one has yet juxtaposed these sets of texts by the Emursors and the Peabodys, but also that scholarly work on Mary’s posthumous novel about Cuba has been minimal. Finally, the juxtaposition of Mark Twain and Queen Lili’uokalani, originally suggested by Professor Allen, became even more interesting when I discovered that they shared an important historical moment. Once I began to write the dissertation, the document took its final shape as Professor Williams suggested that the Emursors and the Peabodys should become separate chapters with different theoretical frameworks. The three anti-colonialists – Ramón Emeterio Betances, José Martí, and José Rizal – thus became one chapter. Professor Allen then suggested that the Hawai’i chapter, which had been originally third in the chronology, should become the last one. This not only made sense, but also allowed me to conclude with a coda about Twain’s post-1898 anti-imperialist writings, and on post-1898 representations of the Filipinos.

The dissertation became a two-part project, one that explores the early colonial visions of the United States toward the Spanish Caribbean, and a second, which explores the transcolonial revisions proposed by writers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, who wrote within multiple colonial contexts. Given my interest in contrapuntal readings, I determined that I wanted to recover texts from less-known writers in the Spanish Caribbean and the Pacific. With that goal in mind, I went about choosing the writers that I would include in the second part of my study. Having taught Martí’s seminal essay, “Our America,” which in 1891 cautioned Spanish American countries against U.S.
imperialism, I decided to choose that essay. Although the essay has been widely studied and anthologized, it has not been examined in the context of these other anti-colonial writings of the time. Identifying a Puerto Rican writer took longer, and after considering and dismissing several nineteenth-century writers from Puerto Rico, including the poet Lola Rodríguez de Tió, and the educator and philosopher Eugenio María de Hostos, I settled on Betances, an anti-colonial patriot. The mastermind of the failed 1868 Grito de Lares revolt against Spain not only corresponded with Martí and supported the Filipino insurrection against Spain, but also wrote about the United States in cautionary terms much earlier than Martí. My father’s suggestion that I look into the work of Filipino anti-colonial activist José Rizal seemed initially thwarted by the fact that Rizal published his last novel, El filibusterismo (Subversion), in 1891 and was executed by Spanish authorities in 1896. At first I thought that Rizal had not written about the United States, despite a short visit in 1888. But Professor Joseph Ponce at Ohio State suggested that I look into an essay Rizal published between 1889 and 1890, the year after he visited California. In that essay, titled “The Philippines: A Century Hence,” Rizal anticipated that the United States would become the next empire to be contended with after Spain in the Pacific. Although the process of identifying writers from both sides of the colonial equation was not easy, the dissertation finally took its final shape.

Scholarly context

At its core, then, this project is a work of discursive cartography. But, unlike a cartographer’s traditional limits of geography, I have sought to chart and to register the
historical tributaries of a pre-1898 discursive U.S. colonialism in the Americas and the Pacific. This transhemispheric mapping provides a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the discursive paradigms that both predated U.S. imperialism, and which U.S. imperialism set in motion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I follow the lead and expand on the work of several key Americanist scholars who in the 1990s began to challenge the notion that 1898 was an exception within the history and literature of the United States. These scholars include John Carlos Rowe, Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, whose role as “New Americanists” paved the way for approaches like mine. Without their ground-breaking contributions, my work would likely be a lot less viable or valued in the U.S. academy today. Notwithstanding, I am surprised that, at the moment of completing this dissertation, I cannot find another major research project that approximates mine in scope or focus.

Given that my dissertation proposes 1830 as its departure point because that is when U.S. intra-continental imperialism began, Rowe’s identification of the relationship between external and internal colonialisms has been particularly instrumental. Rowe argues against the notion that the United States emerged as an imperial power with the Spanish-American War in 1898 by noting that this interpretation “is based on a restricted definition of imperialism as the conquest and domination of foreign territory.”¹³ For Rowe, this argument ignores the “internal colonization” that “depends significantly on the territorial acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, other territories settled during westward expansion, as well as the purchase of Alaska and

¹³ Rowe, Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism, 6.
the annexation of Hawaii.”\textsuperscript{14} Not only does Rowe challenge the myth of empire as a late development in U.S. history, but he also identifies the “techniques of colonization” developed by the United States, which included the “double narrative of an emerging imperialist ideology.” This double narrative, which I discuss fully in Chapter 4, discursively intertwined internal and external “Others,” analogizing African Americans with South Asians, and American Indians with Mexicans. Rowe notes how these “shifting analogies” between people of color colonized intra-continentially and “foreign” people colonized extra-continentially “provided an adaptable and yet surprisingly stable racist . . . rhetoric that could be deployed for new foreign ventures even as it was required to maintain the old systems of controlling familiar groups within the United States.”\textsuperscript{15} Rowe identifies how the connection of the intra-continental Other with its extra-continental counterpart became a major discursive tool in the representations of U.S. imperialism.

Working along similar lines, Kaplan argues that U.S. imperialism has been “simultaneously formative and disavowed” in the conception of a U.S. American identity. Kaplan points to both the “absence of culture from the history of U.S. imperialism” and “the absence of empire from the study of American culture.”\textsuperscript{16} Rather than “viewing empire as a twentieth-century aberration,” Kaplan proposes that U.S. imperialism must be

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\textsuperscript{14} Rowe, \textit{Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism}, 6.
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\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 8.
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studied “as part of an expansionist continuum.” Moreover, she advocates for identifying the “interconnections between internal and external colonization” by highlighting their symbiotic relationship.\(^{17}\) Kaplan’s work on Manifest Domesticity, which I discuss in Chapter 2, also has been significant for developing my ideas. Kaplan argues that in the same way that empire influenced notions of national identity in terms of Manifest Destiny, or the ideal of both cultural and territorial expansion, U.S. imperialism is found in the precepts of domesticity that women writers advocated in the nineteenth century.

Following in the wake of Rowe and Kaplan, Shelley Streeby has more recently argued that 1848, the year of the U.S.-Mexican War, is a more accurate marker for the birth of empire. For Streeby, distinguishing between the expansionism of the 1840s and 1890s as respectively relating to separate “continental” and “imperial” frontiers, serves to naturalize “the post-1848 boundaries of the nation as well as the violent expansionism that made possible the reconstruction of those boundaries.” To dismiss pre-1890s expansionism as “continental” implies that the United States had a right to all of its continental boundaries and was only doing what was natural and expected: expanding. Streeby argues that “by claiming that contiguous lands were part of the continental ‘domestic’ space rather than foreign territory, U.S. continentalists promoted an exceptionalist understanding of the United States as a nonimperial nation.”\(^{18}\) In conducting my research, I have come to question why so many U.S. scholars use the term “expansionism” when referring to pre-1890s expansion, as if that expansion were not part

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\(^{17}\) Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 17-18.

\(^{18}\) This and the preceding quotations are from Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 7, 9-10.
of an imperial project, albeit an intra-continental one. This is especially troubling because this intra-continental expansion was achieved through the forcible and violent removal of American Indian nations from their lands (and on the backs of African and African-descended slaves, whose labor and wealth production were intimately related to the enterprise of westward expansion). For Streeby, reserving “the term ‘imperialism’ for the 1890s reproduces that tenuous and certainly ideological distinction and serves to marginalize or even dismiss a much longer history of U.S. imperialism in the Americas.”

While I agree with Streeby’s analysis, I locate the temporal marker of empire further back in time, in 1830, when the campaign of Indian Removal was sanctioned by the U.S. government, and the process of removing the Choctaw, Seminole, Creek, Chickasaw, and Cherokee from their lands began. The forcible removal of American Indian nations from their lands, and their relocation to sites chosen for them by the U.S. government, was an act of violent colonial invasion on the part of the United States. Streeby is right when she says that to claim imperialism began only with extra-continental, overseas incursions and invasions in 1898 is to naturalize the violent and colonial history of intra-continental expansion. But while Streeby identifies Indian Removal as a “notable” moment in nineteenth-century empire-building, I categorize that moment as the first concerted and premeditated colonial action by the U.S. government, enforced through its military power. To examine “Indian Removal” as something other

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than colonial, as simply part of a troubling “domestic” policy, is to accept the dominant colonial representation of Indian nations as “domestic dependent nations,” which discursively facilitated and justified their colonization. Similar to the extra-continental ventures of the late 1890s, the U.S. government in the 1830s invaded and took over land that did not belong to it, and made war against people who were racial, cultural and national “Others.” Ultimately, this dissertation project not only argues for a historical re-periodization of the start of U.S. empire that considers Indian Removal as a violent imperialist action, but also that this event anticipated the extra-continental events in the Americas and the Pacific more than sixty years later. What distinguishes Indian Removal in 1830 from the centuries-old history of territorial dispossession of land that began with the landing of the Puritans in the seventeenth century is the fact that President Andrew Jackson made it U.S. government policy and deployed the U.S. military in those campaigns. The parallels between that and what President William McKinley did with the U.S. Navy in 1898 in the Spanish Caribbean and the Pacific are evident.

**Colonialist beginnings**

In advocating for a revision of 1898, this dissertation argues that colonialism, as a concomitant to imperialism, is central to the U.S. conception of “Americanness.” In theorizing colonialism as foundational to U.S. national identity, I build on Toni Morrison’s theory that an Africanist presence in U.S. literature has been central to the

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21 Imperialism identifies the expansion of one nation’s hegemony through territorial, political and economic dominance over other nations or peoples, while colonialism describes the actual acquisition and/or settling of territories and their control for imperial purposes.
conception and construction of “Americanness.” Morrison argues that “[d]eep within the word ‘American’ is its association with race [because] American means white, and Africanist people struggle to make the term applicable to themselves with ethnicity and hyphen after hyphen after hyphen.” In the same way that “American” was defined against its Africanist and indigenous counterparts, I argue that there has been a clear colonialist strain in U.S. literary history. The central role of U.S. imperialist expansion is not surprising given the link between slavery and colonialism, which I discuss further in Chapter 2. But my project pushes our field’s theoretical frontiers by proposing that the United States began its colonialist career, both discursively and materially, well before 1898. The word “American” not only represents a racial concept, but is in itself a colonialist concept (as I discuss in Chapter 3) because it represents the imperialist appropriation of a term that describes two entire continents, not just one of their nation-states. Thus, in the same way that the study of the Africanist presence in U.S. literature is absolutely necessary to understand “the social and political nature of received knowledge as it is revealed in American literature,” the study of the colonialist presence – or of how “America” conceived of itself as an empire – is similarly crucial. Morrison proposes that “charting the emergence of an Africanist persona in the development of a national literature” is an urgent project. This dissertation partially answers Morrison’s call by showing the relatedness of the Africanist and colonialist presence in the literary histories of U.S. imperialism.

23 Ibid, 47.
24 Ibid, 48.
With this theoretical foundation in mind, my study of the writings of U.S. empire is, as I noted earlier, divided into two parts. Part 1, which includes Chapters 1 and 2, focuses on the colonial visions disseminated by two sets of writers from New England who wrote in the 1830s, specifically about Puerto Rico and Cuba. Chapter 1 focuses on what I call the “colonial letters” from Puerto Rico of Edward Bliss Emerson and Charles Chauncy Emerson. That chapter proposes that the Emerson brothers participated in and benefited from a transitional moment in the history of Puerto Rico, when U.S. economic influence began to edge the island closer to its economic sphere of power. Chapter 2, set in Cuba, discusses Sophia Peabody’s *Cuba Journal* and Mary Peabody Mann’s *Juanita* as representative examples of a particular U.S. colonial poetics and of a colonial gothic, respectively. These distinct and competing colonial visions anticipate the ways in which later writers will examine the experience of the colonial “contact zone” in the Spanish Caribbean from both colonial and anti-colonial perspectives.²⁵

In Part 2, I examine the transcolonial revisions proposed by writers in the Spanish Caribbean and the Pacific. Chapter 3 juxtaposes the works of Betances, Martí, and Rizal to argue that these were transcolonial anti-colonialists, who deployed their knowledge of and experience with the Spanish empire as tools to identify and caution against the rise of U.S. empire in the Americas and the Pacific. By deploying distinct transcolonial revisions of dominant representations of their regions, and by representing the United States in their own terms, these writers took protagonist roles in the theater of empire in the late nineteenth century. Finally, Chapter 4 juxtaposes the letters and speeches of

Mark Twain about his travel to Hawai’i in 1866 with Queen Liliʻuokalani’s 1898 autobiography. That chapter argues that Twain engaged in a form of colonial translation that was contested by Liliʻuokalani’s own form of indigenized translation. The Conclusion, which functions more as a Coda, looks beyond 1898 by examining Twain’s most famous anti-imperialist essay of 1901, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” and juxtaposing it to some of the pro-imperial writings of Ambrose Bierce during the same time period. I conclude by developing the theoretical implications of my project, discussing the advantages and limitations of applying transhemispheric and transcolonial approaches to the study of U.S. literary history.

By arguing that the extra-continental colonial visions of the United States on Puerto Rico and Cuba can be identified as early as the 1830s, this dissertation reveals the early discourses that anticipated, promoted, and challenged the actual political and economic development of the United States into an empire in 1898. Further, within the context of the competing imperialisms of the late nineteenth century, including a rising U.S. empire, my study shows how writers in Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and Hawai’i deployed transcolonial strategies to propose radical measures to challenge colonialism in their regions. Unlike other scholars, who have read ambivalence in the writings of several of my chosen authors, including Sophia Peabody and José Rizal, I identify a discursive purpose that works for and/or challenges U.S. empire. By examining texts that range from the most private journals and letters, to lectures, speeches, and journalistic essays, to the more public novellas and novels, I show how colonialist discourses developed throughout different genres, and how genre affected the
way in which these discourses were disseminated. My dissertation also explores the ways in which discursive representations of colonialism are found across genders, and identifies the similarities and differences of these authors’ rhetorical choices. Finally, this dissertation engages the idea that cultural clashes, such as those resulting from colonial contacts, necessarily involve translation in terms of the exchange of both languages and cultures. While many of the texts I consider in this study are literal translations, translated from their original languages to English either by translators or by myself, I consider the specific ramifications of translation in a colonial context in the final chapter of the dissertation.

In charting that U.S. colonialist presence between 1830 and 1902 in texts about and from both the Spanish Caribbean and the Pacific, this dissertation accomplishes, albeit in a different form, some of what López Nieves attempted in “Seva.” In the 1980s, “Seva” re-wrote a colonial history by creating a fictional epic that was written as if it were the result of a scholarly research project. Through this non-fictional research project, which reveals the discursive ramifications of U.S. empire before 1898, I shed light on how such discourses have been constructed, and how they have helped to promote the representation of Puerto Ricans (and other colonized peoples in the Americas and the Pacific) as happy colonials. One of the revelations of this project for me has been how these discourses, which continue to be largely in force today, are not singular to Puerto Ricans but cut across geographies, cultures, and races. The more ambitious purpose of this dissertation is to locate U.S. colonialist discourses in the context of Said’s Orientalism and Morrison’s Africanism. If we, as scholars who study empire within the
empire, continue to reveal and unweave the tendrils of the colonialist narratives woven about our peoples, the day will come when those narratives will be wholly unraveled and will cease to fetter us with their power. This dissertation shows that we do not need to invent Seva to find it in or before 1898.
These islands [Puerto Rico and Cuba], from their local position, are natural appendages to the North American continent; and one of them, Cuba, almost in sight of our shore, from a multitude of considerations has become an object of transcendent importance to the political and commercial interests of our Union.

John Quincy Adams

By the time John Quincy Adams made the statement above in 1823, expansionist desire for the Spanish Caribbean had a long-standing history in the United States.¹ As early as 1761, Benjamin Franklin categorized Cuba as a high priority for acquisition, and by 1808, Thomas Jefferson was arguing that the similarity between U.S. and Cuban interests "must exclude all European influence from this hemisphere."² By the 1820s, a clear imperialist rhetoric had developed in the United States that portrayed the two islands still under Spanish control as a bonus to the nation-building project. In December 1823, President James Monroe expanded on Jefferson’s earlier hemispheric vision by issuing a warning to Old World empires that "the American continents . . . are henceforth


not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers." The United States, Monroe cautioned, would "consider any [such] attempt [by Europe] to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." Monroe’s carefully chosen words reveal that the U.S. objected to colonial intrusion by its European rivals, not to colonialism per se. In claiming the entire hemisphere under U.S. control, Monroe naturalized U.S. imperial desires while sounding the death knell for European imperialism in the Americas. In the same year that Monroe issued his doctrine, Jefferson advocated for the acquisition of Cuba, noting that it was "the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of states." Jefferson, like Franklin and Adams, saw Cuba as a resource to fulfill "the measure of our political wellbeing." Tellingly, Adams’ description of Cuba being “almost in sight of our shore” reveals how, although Florida had become a U.S. territory only two years prior in 1821, extra-continental expansionist desire was fueled by the island’s proximity to the recently expanded U.S. borders.

A decade later, when the United States was fully engaged in colonizing and consolidating the territory of what would become its continental borders, especially through the various campaigns of Indian Removal, Puerto Rico and Cuba remained

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3 Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings*, 4-6. Murphy argues that "the Monroe Doctrine's geographic construction of a Western Hemisphere and its relative locations of Europe and North and South America were crucial to the formation of an ideology of American exceptionalism that both claimed a radical separation from European colonialism and enabled cultural, military, and economic dominance."

4 Puerto Rican historian Lidio Cruz Monclova notes how Simón Bolívar, who by 1826 had helped liberate the Latin American colonies from Spanish colonial rule (except for Puerto Rico and Cuba), warned against the Monroe Doctrine, stating that it could lead the United States toward a “militant imperialism.” See Monclova, *Historia de Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1965), 169-70.

desired overseas territories. Once most of the Spanish empire had crumbled after the Spanish-American Revolutions between 1808 and 1826, Puerto Rico and Cuba stood as Spain’s last two colonies in the Caribbean. By the 1840s, when the concept of Manifest Destiny was articulated to justify U.S. expansionism as a God-given mission, and after the United States had annexed Texas in 1846 and taken half of Mexico in 1848, U.S. policy makers never lost sight of the Spanish Caribbean. In the years prior to the Civil War, colonial desire for the large slave plantations of Cuba peaked as Southerners perceived that acquisition of the colony would strengthen their cause. Colonial desire for Cuba resurfaced once more after Reconstruction (1865-1877), especially in the 1880s, when the U.S. government considered purchasing the island from Spain. Finally, the Spanish-American War of 1898 enabled the United States to invade and acquire Cuba.

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6 Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*, 76. Between 1806 and 1823, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France, engaged in an active campaign to wrest American Indian nations of their lands in the south, invaded Spanish Florida and took possession of the Oregon Territory. U.S. naval forces also engaged in several brief interventions in Cuba and Puerto Rico between 1822 and 1825.


8 Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*, 87-8. Williams describes Manifest Destiny as "a 200-proof imperial snort," coined by John L. O'Sullivan, editor of the Democratic Review. O’Sullivan proposed it to describe "the beginning of a new history" that connected the United States "with the future only" and gave it the ultimate mission “to smite unto death the tyranny of kings . . .and carry the glad tidings of peace and good will where myriads now endure an existence scarcely more enviable than the beasts of the field." For more on the concept of Manifest Destiny, see Mark S. Joy, *American Expansionism, 1783-1860: A Manifest Destiny?* (London: Pearson, 2003).

and Puerto Rico and become “master of empires in the Caribbean and the Pacific.”

Little more than a century after Puerto Rico and Cuba became objects of colonial desire for the Founding Fathers, the United States acquired the two islands as its colonial possessions.

Although the colonial vision of an “empire of liberty” is found at the very inception of the United States, the traditional view among many historians and literary scholars is that the nation emerged as a de facto imperial power with the Spanish American War of 1898. Arguing against that view, Americanist scholar John Carlos Rowe suggests that “the imperial heritage of the United States” can be traced “[v]irtually from the moment the original colonies defined themselves as a nation.” Further, Rowe argues that U.S. colonialism began intra-territorially through African slavery, the dispossession of American Indian nations, and the internal exploitation of Asians, Latino(a)s and other ethnic and national minorities. Rowe, who identifies these as the “human territories” colonized by the United States prior to and along with its territorial expansion, further argues that the U.S. imperial project was supported through narratives

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10 Ernest R. May, *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay* (New York, Atheneum, 1968), 3. May argues that: "In 1898-99, the United States became a colonial power. It annexed the Hawaiian Islands. Humbling Spain in a short war, it took [Cuba], Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In quick sequence it also acquired Guam and part of Samoa and, if the Danish Rigsdag had consented, would have bought the Virgin Islands. In an eighteen-month period it became master of empires in the Caribbean and the Pacific."

11 Joy, *American Expansionism*, xxvii. Joy explains that according “to this theory, the United States would expand, at the expense of the neighboring nations or Indian tribes, but ultimately incorporation into America would be a boon for the people of their neighboring lands as they came to share in the American political system and its emphasis on freedom.”

that served to promote imperial expansion and control.\textsuperscript{13} For Rowe, the novel was “one of the chief cultural means of legitimizing imperial practices,” and it is through the novel, such as the eighteenth-century works of Charles Brockden Brown and the nineteenth-century texts of Herman Melville and Mark Twain, that Rowe traces what he calls the “literary genealogies” of U.S. empire.\textsuperscript{14}

In Part 1 of my dissertation, I expand on Rowe’s argument to show how early nineteenth-century U.S. writers, who had traveled to Puerto Rico and Cuba, articulated initial literary expressions of a colonial vision that both legitimized and challenged U.S. imperial ambitions. I further show how the novel was not the only significant literary genre through which colonial visions were articulated and disseminated in the nineteenth century. Along with novels, which legitimized imperial discourses among large public audiences, private letters and journals spread colonial visions, albeit to smaller numbers of people; they were no less clear in anticipating an imperialist agenda. This section shows how one of the earliest literary representations, or discourses, of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico and Cuba is found in the private correspondence and the journals of members of the New England intellectual elite. Significantly, those same letters were used to craft the first anti-slavery and anti-colonial U.S. novel written about Cuba in the 1830s but not published until the 1880s.

Two sets of writings, one each from Puerto Rico and from Cuba, were important conveyors of colonial meaning-making as they circulated among the renowned Emerson

\textsuperscript{13} Rowe, \textit{Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism}, 5, 8.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 14,22.
and Peabody families of New England between 1831 and 1835. Two younger brothers of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Bliss Emerson (1805-1834) and Charles Chauncy Emerson (1808-1836), traveled to Puerto Rico in their twenties, between 1831 and 1834, to recover from tuberculosis. Both brothers, especially Charles, maintained a substantial correspondence with relatives in New England. Edward, who worked as a clerk for the U.S. consul in Puerto Rico, also kept a minutely detailed journal, parts of which have been transcribed and published. Upon his return from Puerto Rico, Charles gave a lecture at the Concord Lyceum in 1833 titled “One of the West India Islands.” Ralph Waldo excerpted sections of Charles’ journal under the title “A Leaf from ‘A Voyage to Puerto Rico,’” and published them in 1843 in The Dial, the magazine that he and Elizabeth Peabody published. Elizabeth’s younger sister, Sophia Amelia Peabody (1809-1871) was also in her twenties when she traveled to the tropics to recover from chronic and disabling migraines. Sophia lived in Cuba between 1833 and 1835 with her

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15 Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson, The Emerson Brothers: A Fraternal Biography in Letters (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 153. For nineteenth-century New Englanders, travel to the warmer climates of the Caribbean to recover from tuberculosis was a doctor-mandated “cure.” The Dutch island of St. Croix, which was purchased by the United States in the early twentieth century, was a popular site for such restorative visits. Bosco and Myerson point out that the Emerson brothers found St. Croix too full of dying U.S. tubercular patients and preferred Puerto Rico.

16 For a transcription of the lecture, see Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, “‘Keeping an eye a patriot and the other an emigrant’: An Introduction to the ‘Lecture on Porto Rico’ by Charles Chauncy Emerson,” Revista/Review Interamericana 23, no. 3-4 (1993): 26-50.


18 Megan Marshall, The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 190. Marshall explains how, as a child, Sophia had been given doses of mercury by her pharmacist father as a purgative, which were later “considered by the family as the chief reason she seemed destined to become ‘a life-long invalid.’” Her bouts of dizziness could be triggered by any sound or noise, and her father was “forbidden to rock in his chair” in the evenings for fear that it would trigger an
sister, Mary Tyler Peabody (1806-1887), who worked as a governess for the family of a U.S. doctor and plantation owner settled on that island, and the sisters maintained an extensive correspondence with their relatives in Boston. Sophia’s fifty-six letters were collated and bound by her older sister, Elizabeth, and edited by her mother into a home-published manuscript in 1835 titled *The Cuba Journal.* Sophia’s journal circulated widely among the intellectual elite in Boston and Salem, including her future husband, Nathaniel Hawthorne, who read the journal before proposing and later excerpted parts of Sophia’s journal in his writings. Mostly based on her own letters from Cuba, Mary (who upon returning to New England married educator and legislator Horace Mann) wrote a novel against slavery and colonialism, which was published posthumously in 1887.

The Emerson and Peabody writings provide evidence that years before Manifest Destiny was articulated publicly as a political ideal, the notion that the United States had a providential mission and destiny to expand into a continental empire was expressed attack. Sophia also suffered from "bouts of what the family referred to as 'confusion,' when pain and fever kept her delirious in bed for days at a time."

19 Claire M. Badaracco, Introduction to "'The Cuba Journal' of Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, Volume I, Edited from the Manuscript with an Introduction," xcviii, xxii. According to Badaracco, ten of the twenty-seven letters are copies by Sophia's mother, Mrs. Peabody. "Volume I" is how Elizabeth described the letters she circulated among her circle in Boston, and which may have been further circulated by Mrs. Peabody in Salem. Badaracco notes, however, that there is no actual physical description of the contents of the volume Elizabeth circulated.

20 Ibid, iii-iv. Badaracco notes how scholarly work on the journal has been largely limited to examining it as a cultural artifact or as part of the courtship between Sophia and her husband-to-be, Nathaniel Hawthorne, who later excerpted sixteen passages from the journal into his first American notebook.

more privately in literary and cultural terms. Also significantly, the writings of the Emerson brothers and Peabody sisters represent some of the first textual representations of Puerto Rico and Cuba in the United States. These texts are authored by influential U.S. writers who traveled to Puerto Rico and Cuba for financial and/or personal gain at a time of significant economic transition in both islands. By the 1830s, Puerto Rico and Cuba had become increasingly dependent economically on the United States and less so on Spain. Because of the increased U.S. financial presence in these islands, Edward and Mary were able to secure positions with U.S. citizens settled in Puerto Rico and Cuba, respectively. These occupations not only helped them earn a living, but also enabled their younger siblings, Charles and Sophia, to travel to the Caribbean to recover from their illnesses. The Emersons and Peabodys were thus active participants in and beneficiaries of the early economic colonization by the United States of Puerto Rico and Cuba.

The importance of the Emerson and Peabody texts is directly related to the significant role that both families played in the development of a national U.S. culture in the nineteenth century. The Emerson brothers could not only trace their ancestry to the first settlements of New England, but also were members of a family actively engaged in


23 Badaracco, “Introduction,” xi. Badaracco notes how the Reverend Abiel Abbot of Andover, Massachusetts, visited Cuba in 1827-28 and stayed with the Morrells, the same family Sophia and Mary later stayed with. His *Letters Written in the Interior* was published posthumously in 1829.

24 See Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Torn Between Empires: Economy, Society, and Patterns of Political Thought in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1840-1878* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 12. Martínez-Fernández argues that between the 1830s and 1840s “the volume of trade between the United States and Cuba surpassed by a considerable margin that between the United States and any other country in Latin America.”
molding the social, political and religious elements of U.S. intellectual life. Because of their ancestry, the brothers grew up under the expectation that they would contribute something significant to the national sphere.\(^{25}\) Although by the time of their deaths Edward and Charles were keenly aware that they had not fulfilled those expectations, I argue that it is perhaps in the context of their brother, Ralph Waldo, that their influence was most significant.\(^{26}\) In 1837, several years after Edward and Charles had died, Ralph Waldo gave his famous “The American Scholar” lecture in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The lecture, hailed by Oliver Wendell Holmes as the U.S. “Intellectual Declaration of Independence,” not only articulated a national cultural identity, but also set forth an agenda for the U.S. intellectual.\(^{27}\) For Ralph Waldo, this “American Scholar” was a man who would plant himself “indomitably on his instincts, and there abide [so that] the huge world will come round to him.” The duties of this “American Scholar” included “the conversion of the world” and the construction of a new “nation of men” where “each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul.”\(^{28}\) Significantly, Ralph Waldo’s ideas about an American Scholar not only articulate a cultural vision that anticipates the ideals

\(^{25}\) Bosco and Myerson, *The Emerson Brothers*, 14. Bosco and Myerson argue that the lives of the Emerson brothers “were shaped by assumptions about their place in family history and position in the world-at-large. These assumptions had been developed over nearly two centuries prior to the brothers’ birth and were reinforced by lessons on family history passed down to the brothers” by their relatives.

\(^{26}\) Ibid, 113, 185. After Charles’ death in May 1836, Ralph Waldo stated that because he had seen “the world through [Charles’] eyes,” with Charles gone “he felt his own sight and imagination had grown irreparably ‘dim.’” Ralph Waldo also memorialized Edward “as his ‘brother of the brief but blazing star’” in a poem titled “In Memoriam.” See Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Poems* (Boston: Houghton, Miffling, 1898), 261-5.


of Manifest Destiny expansionism, but do so after Edward’s and Charles’ experiences in Puerto Rico. After all, Ralph Waldo was not the one who took U.S. intellectualism to the colonial frontier and there envisioned how the world could be converted in the way he saw the “American Scholar” doing. Edward and Charles, however, acted as early U.S. American Scholars by traveling to Puerto Rico and articulating a colonial vision through a particularly U.S. intellectual lens.

Like the Emersons, the Peabody sisters could trace their origins to the initial families who had arrived from England and they also were born into a family with national ambitions. The sisters’ letters from Cuba were sent to Elizabeth, who circulated Sophia's letters among at least two dozen Bostonians and sponsored readings at different venues. All three Peabody sisters, Elizabeth, Mary and Sophia, made significant contributions to the development of a national culture in the nineteenth century in the areas of philosophy, literature, art, education and politics, during the same period in which the Emerson brothers made their mark.29 The Peabody sisters’ close relationships to, and their influence on men of renown, including Ralph Waldo, Hawthorne and Mann, secured the preservation of their letters and documents. Recently, the Peabodys’ letters, especially Sophia’s, have received substantial scholarly attention, mostly in biographies that argue for the sisters’ standing as noteworthy producers of cultural knowledge separate from and in addition to their connections to famous men.30

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30 Ibid, xviii. In addition to Marshall, see Bruce A. Ronda, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody: A Reformer on Her Own Terms (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Patricia Dunlavy Valenti’s Sophia Peabody Hawthorne: A Life, Volume 1 (1809-1847) (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004); and Monika M.
Although these two sets of texts have been considered separately by Emerson and Peabody scholars, my study is the first not only to consider these writings together, but also to analyze them as expressions of an early U.S. colonial vision. Texts on Puerto Rico by U.S. Americans prior to 1898 are rare, and the Emerson letters may well be the first and most important of their kind. While the Peabody sisters were not the first U.S. Americans to visit Cuba or to write about their experiences there, hemispheric American studies scholar Rodrigo Lazo argues that their writings about Cuba are significantly different from those of their contemporaries.\footnote{Travel accounts of Cuba in the nineteenth century were so common that Lazo has categorized them as a genre that he calls the “Cuba guide.” For Lazo, Sophia and Mary break with the “Cuba guide” genre in important ways, which I discuss fully in Chapter 2. Undoubtedly, there are many fascinating nuances in how these two sets of writers experienced and narrated their stays on these islands, but my specific interest is primarily in how their writings express a fledgling colonial vision. Moreover, I am interested in how these writers articulated a U.S. identity and positioned it in opposition to the colonial identities they crafted for Puerto Rico and Cuba.}

The idea for this study came to me several years ago after I read Frank Otto Gatell’s short article, published in 1959, about Edward’s and Charles’ letters, titled Elbert, Julie E. Hall, and Katharine Rodier, Reinventing the Peabody Sisters (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006).

\footnote{For a sampling of travel accounts on Cuba between 1801 and 1899 see Louis A. Pérez, Jr., ed., Slaves, Sugar, and Colonial Society: Travel Accounts of Cuba, 1801-1899 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992). Pérez does not include the Peabody sisters in his catalogue of Cuba-focused texts.}
“Puerto Rico through New England Eyes 1831-1834.” What struck me most about the letters was that the representations by the Emersons of the people of Puerto Rico in the 1830s as lazy, happy colonials were largely identical not only to the Spanish colonial descriptions of Puerto Ricans, but also to the later colonial representations of Puerto Ricans found in U.S. texts from 1898 onward. After I read the transcribed first volume of Sophia’s *Cuba Journal*, I was again struck by the way in which these two sets of writers, separately yet simultaneously, anticipated not only some of the ideals of Manifest Destiny that were more than a decade away but also the colonial discourses about these islands that were deployed decades after 1898. For my study, I selected specific passages that reflect the similar and different ways in which Edward, Charles, Sophia and Mary anticipated, promoted and/or challenged the colonial rhetoric that the United States eventually disseminated about these islands by the start of the twentieth century.

Although all of them participated in and benefited from the early U.S. colonization of these islands, my claim here is not that Edward, Charles, Sophia or Mary acted as literal colonial agents who planted the U.S. flag in Puerto Rico and Cuba in the 1830s in anticipation of 1898. Rather, I am interested in the more subtle and arguably more influential agency and staying power of the colonial or anti-colonial visions that Edward, Charles, Sophia and Mary deployed and anticipated in their writings. Within the larger argument of this dissertation, these U.S. writers were among the first and most important ones to articulate the extra-continental colonial aspirations of a nation in the midst of a violent expansionist campaign to build its intra-continental empire.

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The colonial visions articulated by Edward, Charles, Sophia and Mary were crafted not only in relation to how they saw the colonial subjects in Puerto Rico and Cuba, but also on how they saw themselves in relation to those representations. For both Edward and Sophia, their respective stays in Puerto Rico and Cuba served to disconnect them from the strict moral and religious obligations of life in New England. They also shared a troubling silence about the atrocities and amorality of Caribbean slavery, which they seldom, if ever, mention in the texts I examined. In contrast, Charles and Mary directly addressed slavery in their writing and their exposure to colonial slavery contributed to their eventual self-identification as vocal abolitionists. Edward, Charles and Sophia all expressed disdain for what they represented as the docile, child-like inhabitants of the islands, who could be entertaining but who could offer nothing intellectually or politically significant to be learned. In the texts on which I focus, none of these three writers refers to the inhabitants of these islands as Puerto Ricans or Cubans. In this way, they all ignore a national identity that many in Puerto Rico and Cuba struggled to establish through the early 1800s and beyond, especially as the Latin American colonies freed themselves of Spanish colonial rule in the 1820s. In her anti-colonial novel, however, Mary describes Cuba as innately corrupt and corruptive, and while she does refer to Cubans by that name, her representation of them is mostly negative. Charles and Sophia also shared a strong and sexually inflected colonial desire for the land, for its fertile richness and its bountiful resources. In many ways, the writings of Edward, Charles, Sophia and Mary anticipate the colonial visions that later both justified and challenged extra-continental U.S. colonialism.
Chapter 1 focuses on selections from about twenty letters by Edward and Charles, most of those written from Puerto Rico, most of which have been transcribed by Emerson scholars, and the excerpts of Edward’s and Charles’ journals that have been published. The extant correspondence among the brothers, William, Ralph Waldo, Edward and Charles, numbers at more than one thousand letters and has been studied mostly as biographical documentation. My work examines Edward’s and Charles’ texts as “colonial letters” within a transitional period in the Spanish Caribbean of increased U.S. economic influence, which served to pave the way for their military and political control by century’s end. In Chapter 2, I focus on passages from the twenty-seven letters by Sophia Peabody included in Volume 1 of the *Cuba Journal*, dated from December 1833 to July 1834, which are transcribed. I also discuss several transcribed letters from Volume 3, which have been published. Further, I analyze Mary Peabody’s novel, *Juanita: A Romance of Real Life in Cuba Fifty Years Ago*, which she began writing in the 1830s, once she returned to New England from Cuba. Although Mary revised the novel substantially in the 1850s, the manuscript was not published until after her death and after slavery had been abolished in both the United States and Cuba. Similar to my analysis in Chapter 1, my study of the Peabody sisters identifies two distinct and competing colonial visions in their texts from Cuba: the colonial poetics of Sophia’s journal and the colonial gothic evident in Mary’s novel.
CHAPTER 1

COLONIAL LETTERS FROM PUERTO RICO

One way to understand the significance of the Emersons’ letters from Puerto Rico is to locate them within the context of the “contact zone” as described by Mary Louise Pratt. As sites of “colonial meaning-making,” contact zones are “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.” In the contact zone, Pratt identifies travel writing, especially through letters, as a key genre in creating and propagating colonial structures of knowledge.

At the time when the Emerson brothers traveled to Puerto Rico, the island was a contact zone in transition from one colonial system to another. Not only was Puerto Rico one of the four remaining colonies of a weakened and diminished Spanish empire, but it also was coming under the growing economic control of the

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33 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 5. Pratt’s project identifies how travel and exploration writing "produced 'the rest of the world' for European readerships.” Pratt also is interested in how Europe conceptualized itself as different “to something it became possible to call 'the rest of the world'?” Likewise, these early texts on Puerto Rico and Cuba helped to “produce” these islands for the consumption of U.S. Americans, and the United States’ conception of itself as different from them.

34 Ibid, 4-5.
Historian Luis Martínez-Fernández notes how although the United States in the 1820s supported the continental revolutions against Spanish domination, it “developed a policy toward Cuba and Puerto Rico that differed notably from that applied in the rest of Latin America.” In 1826, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Clay wrote to Spain to declare that the United States “desires no political change” in the colonial status of the islands. In supporting Spain’s debilitated control over Puerto Rico and Cuba, the United States sought to protect its expanding economic interests as well as to prevent Britain from expanding its power in the region. By 1830, the United States had made such economic inroads in Puerto Rico that almost fifty percent of all of that island’s exports were bought by the United States while almost thirty percent of its imports also came from that country. Through the 1830s, the United States began to consolidate its economic influence over Puerto Rico and Cuba, quickly becoming the islands’ most important market. This increasing economic dominance contributed to making the two islands more desirable to the United States as actual colonies and thereby began to clear the way for their eventual political and military subjugation in 1898.


36 Martínez-Fernández, Torn Between Empires, 12, 13.


38 Martínez-Fernández, Torn Between Empires, 3. Throughout “the middle decades of the nineteenth century, with the exception of the years of the Civil War in the United States, [U.S.] political and economic influence over [Cuba and Puerto Rico] increased tremendously and consistently.”
The Emsons directly benefited from and participated in this early U.S. economic incursion into the Spanish Caribbean in the 1830s. Although both Edward and Charles originally traveled to Puerto Rico to recover from tuberculosis, Edward soon began working for one of the U.S. Americans who settled there after Spain loosened economic restrictions against foreign investment in the early nineteenth century. Upon leaving New England in 1830, Edward’s plan was to secure a position in Puerto Rico or Cuba because of the financial boom among U.S. Americans who had invested in plantations and trade in those islands. Once in Puerto Rico, Edward told William in a May 1831 letter that he wanted to learn Spanish and get acquainted “with commerce [to obtain] a sort of foothold from [which] I might afterward advance if good prospects should appear.”39 Both his letters and his journal show not only how economic interests were at the forefront of Edward’s interests but also how most of those in his social circle were U.S. Americans who had settled in Puerto Rico to make their fortune. Like Edward, Charles benefited from this initial economic incursion into the island because it was his brother’s presence in Puerto Rico that allowed him to travel there to recover from his first serious bout of tuberculosis, the illness that killed him a few years later after he returned to New England. The Emsons’ letters and journals, which can be categorized among the early writings of U.S. extra-continental expansion, suggest that contact zones include spaces in transition from one colonial context to another, such as Puerto Rico in the 1830s.

39 Bosco and Myerson, The Emerson Brothers, 133, 134.
Given that Puerto Rico and Cuba were islands “torn between empires,” I use the term “colonial letters” to describe the Emersons’ writings, for they reveal the rhetorical structures of a budding discursive U.S. colonialism. In the transitional contact zone of Puerto Rico, the Emancers invariably represent themselves in a position of cultural and intellectual superiority over the island inhabitants with whom they interact. By deploying this discourse of superiority but not advocating direct colonization of the island, the Emersons’ letters fall within the colonial writings, mostly of travel and exploration, that Pratt argues first deployed a rhetoric of “strategic innocence.” Under this strategy of representation, European travel writers and naturalists set themselves apart from the “older imperial rhetorics of conquest” to establish their own innocence at the same time that they asserted a clear colonial hegemony over the lands they visited. Pratt describes this rhetorical strategy as the “anti-conquest” because in such writings “the European male subject” gazes on the colonial landscape with “imperial eyes [that] passively look out and possess.” Pratt argues that:

Even though the travelers were witnessing the daily realities of the contact zone, even though the institutions of expansionism made their travels possible, the discourse of travel that natural history produces, and is produced by, turns on a great longing: for a way of taking possession without subjugation and violence.

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40 Martínez-Fernández, Torn Between Empires, 5-6, 7. While most studies “of the region’s relations with the United States have mostly centered either on the first stages of the opening of trade and diplomatic relations (1800-1830) or on the culmination of U.S. expansionism (1880-1900),” his study focuses on “the relatively ignored middle decades because it was then that the tide shifted toward U.S. hegemony in the Hispanic Caribbean.” Further, the historian notes how the term “torn between empires” reflects his own experience “and those of millions of fellow Antillanos who have also been torn by a struggle between empires.”

41 This and the preceding four quotations are from Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 7, 57.
While the Emrons were not naturalists, their colonial letters echo their European counterparts. The Emerson brothers not only lived in and benefited from the contact zone, but it was the U.S. expansionist presence in Puerto Rico that made their travel possible and financially feasible. By taking possession of Puerto Rico discursively, the Emrons’ colonial letters evidence a U.S.-style “anti-conquest” in Puerto Rico, which accompanied U.S. economic penetration into the island.

Acting like a colonial “scout,” to use Pratt’s term, Edward consistently encodes what he encounters as “unimproved’ [and, therefore, as] available for improvement.” Edward’s letters further anticipate the representations of Puerto Ricans as happy colonials, eliding mention of the repressive Spanish military regime in force during the time he visited. And while Edward refers repeatedly to the “negroes” he saw, he barely mentions the institution of slavery by name. Edward also discusses the positive influence that U.S. culture would have on the island’s culture, and he anticipates the ideals of Manifest Destiny. In his colonial letters, Charles echoes Edward’s representations of Puerto Rico inhabitants at the same time that he locates himself within and against the context of old European imperialisms, and expresses an innocent longing for the island’s sensual beauty. In this chapter, I argue that the Emrons’ letters help us identify the specific features of an early discursive colonialism, a U.S.-style “anti-conquest” in the transitional contact zone of Puerto Rico.

In articulating an early U.S. colonial vision, the Emrons’ letters also add to our understanding of the kinds of historical and cultural work that letters as a genre

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42 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 61.
performed in the context of early U.S. expansionism. As the territorial frontiers of the United States stretched farther apart throughout the 1800s, the letter became "the essential technique of nation formation" through which a national identity and culture were theorized and disseminated. Americanist scholar Elizabeth Hewitt argues that given its emphasis on social mediation, the letter became the obvious technology that the nation’s founders chose “to interrogate the most crucial question of national construction: how will we be united?” Because of its discursive power, both in terms of its persuasiveness and ease of dissemination, the letter became the textual medium through which the U.S. nation and its brand of democracy were conceived, debated, finessed and promoted both in the political and literary arenas. Hewitt argues that the letter became an important political tool in nation-building, especially as the distances between citizens in the fledgling nation became more vast. Not only did letters have the unique ability to “collapse distances,” but letters also persuaded writers and readers alike that their union was inevitable.43

Distances between letter writers and readers became greater and more challenging when they marked not only intra-continental separations but when they mediated extra-continental rifts across oceans, such as the Emersons’ letters from Puerto Rico. Epistolary scholar William Merrill Decker argues that as a genre, the transoceanic, or transatlantic letter traces its roots in this hemisphere to Christopher Columbus' colonial enterprise. Decker notes how the transoceanic letter in the Americas was born within the

colonial context that set in motion the eventual establishment of a Spanish Empire in this hemisphere. The earliest records of correspondence from the New World are found in *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, which is based on the letters sent by Columbus to the Spanish sovereigns. In his letters, Columbus crafted the representations of the land and the people of the New World that became staple colonial discourses about America. Columbus represented this so-called New World as a place of incomparable natural beauty, ready to be seized politically and exploited commercially, and inhabited by people demonstrably inferior to Europeans and in need of civilization and Christianization. In his letters to the Spanish sovereigns, Columbus constructed the Indies in ways that collapsed the distance between the new and the old worlds and stereotyped the "Otherness" of the New World to subjugate it to the political will of Spain. Within the context of colonialism, the sub-genre of the transoceanic letter added a level of complexity to the letter’s "immediacy and intimacy" because it contributed to domesticating and colonizing the foreign in discursive terms.44

The colonial letters of the Em­ersons fall within Decker's category of transoceanic letters because they, like Columbus’ letters, mediated across an ocean between different geographical locations and cultures within a colonial context. In the Americas, one of the main purposes of the letter was to fashion the New World in European terms and to bring the foreign "Other" into the private, domestic space where letters were received, read and circulated. The letter made distant cultures immediately accessible and intimately

knowable to different groups of people. By constructing the New World as it was being "discovered" and colonized, Columbus’ letters persuasively represented imperial rule over impossibly distant lands as possible, promoting and cementing Spain's discursive and political colonial project. In like manner, the colonial letters by the Emisons on Puerto Rico were not only written under a waning Spanish colonialism, but they also anticipated U.S. colonialism within the context of nineteenth-century national expansion and consolidation. The Emisons’ colonial letters also contribute to the discursive representation of an “Americanness” predicated on its separateness from and superiority to its national and racial “Others.”

Expanding on Hewitt’s theories about the cultural work that the letter performed as a genre in U.S. nation-building and culture, I argue that the Emisons’ colonial letters reveal how the genre concomitantly contributed to create and disseminate early U.S. extra-continental colonial discourses. The Emisons’ letters reflect how U.S. nation-building in the nineteenth century not only included philosophical musings about how the nation would remain united, but also about how the nation might conceive of itself as a potential colonial power. Within this context, the Emisons’ colonial letters functioned as channels of cultural transmission between the United States as a potential colonizer and some highly desired and economically profitable extra-continental colonies. While the letters and journals themselves remained mostly private, circulated primarily among the Emison relatives, the main concepts therein found public audiences, especially through Charles and Ralph Waldo. Not only did the youngest brother give a lecture

45 Decker, *Epistolary Practices*, 11. Decker argues that the “familiar letter served as an important channel of cultural transmission.”
about Puerto Rico upon his return to New England, but Ralph Waldo published excerpts of Charles’ journal in The Dial. Before U.S. historians, anthropologists, ethnographers, journalists, essayists, political scientists, photographers and writers traveled en masse to Puerto Rico to study and categorize its colonial subjects after 1898, the Ememrson’s writings had collapsed the distance and mediated between the United States and Puerto Rican cultures. As I stated in the introduction, my claim here is not that the Ememrson directly advocated for U.S. colonial possession of Puerto Rico. Rather, I argue that the Ememrson’s textual representations of Puerto Rico and its inhabitants anticipated the U.S. imperial agenda by making such a project seem not only desirable but also easily accomplishable.

Gatell, a scholar on the Emerson brothers, argues that Edward’s and Charles’ “ambivalent attitudes” about life in Puerto Rico are as interesting as the historical details that they recorded. Gatell praises the Ememrsons for being “honest enough . . . to point out areas in which their beloved New England might learn from what they considered an erring, puerile society.” Unlike Gatell, I find little ambivalence in the Ememrson’s colonial vision. Their letters establish New England in binary opposition and as superior to the Puerto Rico society they simultaneously desired and disdained. Because they articulated an early colonial agenda in philosophical and literary ways, the Emerson letters served to anticipate the possibility of U.S. intervention in Puerto Rico, both to improve its people through U.S. cultural influence and to exploit and consume its bountiful resources. In convincingly representing Puerto Rico inhabitants as happy

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46 Both quotations are from Gatell, “New England Eyes,” 282.
colonials, Edward and Charles were able to influence the opinions of those who read their
letters, especially Ralph Waldo.\textsuperscript{47} His brothers’ impressions of what Gatell describes as
an “erring, puerile society” and their expressed beliefs in the superiority of New
England’s more refined and intellectual culture must have struck a chord with their older
brother.\textsuperscript{48}

Although the brothers were very different, their biographers, Ronald A. Bosco
and Joel Myerson, argue that “the stories of Edward and Charles are in essence a single
story.” The two were over-achieving and ambitious, and they were considered “the best
and the brightest” of the Emerson siblings. But their ambition took a great toll on them
and their family. Edward was born on April 17, 1805, the fourth child of Reverend
William Emerson and Ruth Haskins. Despite his physical frailty, which dated to his
childhood, Edward displayed “a maniacal tendency to overstudy” and a “predisposition to
read excessively and work long hours in order to achieve a reputation” as a lawyer. In
1828, Edward suffered a terrible mental and physical breakdown that forced the family to
institutionalize him for five months in an asylum for mentally ill and violent patients in
Charlestown.\textsuperscript{49} Two years later, in December 1830, a recovered Edward was by then
suffering from tuberculosis so he left Boston for St. Croix and later traveled on to Puerto

\textsuperscript{47} Of eleven letters about Puerto Rico that I examined, Edward wrote seven of them to Ralph Waldo, two to
Charles, one to his Aunt Mary Moody Emerson, and one to his stepfather, Rev. Ezra Ripley. Of five letters
by Charles about Puerto Rico, two were written to Ralph Waldo, and one each to his mother, grandfather
and Miss Jane Wigglesworth.

\textsuperscript{48} For one, in an 1831 letter to both Edward and Charles in Puerto Rico, Ralph Waldo cautions them that
“the great misfortune of travelers” is that their “eye gradually forms [itself] to the new scene—in the West
Indies they become West Indians in a few days.” Ralph Waldo warns them to “keep one eye a patriot & the

\textsuperscript{49} All quotations from Bosco and Myerson, \textit{The Emerson Brothers}, 114, 118.
Rico. That is where he began what he described as his four-year “exile,” hoping that the climate would cure him. During most of the time he was in Puerto Rico, Edward worked as a clerk for Sidney Mason, of New York, who was the U.S. consul in Puerto Rico, as well as a merchant and plantation owner. He learned Spanish and traveled back to Boston only once, in 1832, for a two-month visit with his family. Edward’s hope to recover from tuberculosis never materialized and he died in Puerto Rico on September 30, 1834. His body, which the Emerson family intended to recover and bury in New England, never made it back to the States. Thus, Edward’s remains were likely interred in a mass grave in the cemetery near El Morro Castle in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico.\(^{50}\)

Edward’s physical and mental breakdown in 1828 marked the start of a downward spiral for the Emerson family, which culminated with Charles’ sudden and shocking death in 1836. Charles, born on November 27, 1808, was the youngest of the Emerson brothers and was predisposed “to depression, world-weariness, and self-doubt.” He visited Edward in Puerto Rico from December 1831 through April 1832 because he also had shown signs of tuberculosis, a common and deadly affliction among the New England intellectual elite. Charles’ stay in Puerto Rico gave him a first-hand exposure to the institution of slavery and helped awaken an awareness that later “informed his views on slavery and Indian rights for the remainder of his life.” Charles returned to Boston, opened a law office, and in 1833 wrote and delivered his first public lecture about life in Puerto Rico, titled “One of the West India Islands,” which directly addressed slavery.\(^{51}\)

\(^{50}\) Bosco and Myerson, *The Emerson Brothers*, 133, 135, 150.

\(^{51}\) Ibid, 113, 114, 154, 170.
Charles became engaged that year and continued to lecture in several cities on topics from Socrates to slavery. Edward’s death in 1834 was a great blow to Charles and to the entire family, but it was Charles’ own death in 1836 that shocked everyone. After an afternoon ride with his mother in New York City, Charles “climbed the steps to his brother’s William’s house, sat down, and without uttering a word or displaying any awareness that he was about to die, he expired.”

Like Edward’s death before his, Charles’ untimely end shook the Emerson family’s foundations. The brothers’ similar paths crossed again as their lives came to equally distressing and unexpected ends.

“Like a docile child”: Edward Bliss Emerson in Puerto Rico

Before he wrote his colonial letters home, Edward penned his impressions of Puerto Rico in a private journal, which reveals his interest and stake in the early economic colonization of the island by U.S. Americans. Edward’s repeated references to the expanding sugar industry, to the planting of coffee, to the technical improvements brought about by U.S. ingenuity and investment, and to the “negroes,” whom he does not refer to as slaves, all point to Edward’s relationship to the United States’ economic incursion into Puerto Rico. Further, Edward’s journal supports the notion that Puerto Rico was a contact zone in transition from one colonial power to another in economic terms. This island in transition was teeming with U.S. Americans, including Edward’s host and eventual employer, Sidney Mason, whom Edward met when passing through the

52 Bosco and Myerson, The Emerson Brothers, 178-9.
island of St. Thomas on his way to San Juan. Most of the names Edward mentions in his journal appear to be fellow U.S. Americans, including “Messrs. Grant, Watlington & Stewart,” “Mr. Gore,” “Mr. McCormick,” “Mr. G. Morrison,” “Mr. Hamilton,” “Mr. Cunningham,” “Mr. Calder,” and “Capt. Bedlow.” When he met someone of another nationality, such as a Spaniard, a South American or an Irish person, Edward described them as such in his journal. Although there is no mention of their national affiliation, I suggest that those mentioned above were fellow U.S. Americans because we can assume that, in writing privately, Edward felt no need to add further identifying details for those who shared his own nationality. Further, it makes sense that since Edward was working for the U.S. consul in Puerto Rico, he would meet most of the U.S. Americans settled there, especially in the capital city, where he lived and worked.

The early U.S. economic colonization of Puerto Rico was accompanied by a discursive colonization that included the renaming of the island and of its capital city. Most U.S. Americans by the 1830s already referred to the capital city of San Juan as St. John’s and to Puerto Rico as Porto Rico. These Anglicized names are especially significant because they suggest that the re-naming, which translated the island and the city into U.S. terms, was directly connected to the growing U.S. economic influence in Puerto Rico. This type of colonial translation, in which the national identity of a people are both metaphorically and linguistically translated into the terms of the colonizer, is a pattern that is repeated and challenged in different ways throughout this dissertation, and

53 Bosco and Myerson, The Emerson Brothers, 133.

which I fully discuss in Chapter 4. Through an act of colonial translation, the island’s identity was thereby Americanized even before Puerto Rico became an official U.S. colony. One of the first acts of the U.S. government upon acquiring the island in 1898 was to officially change its name to Porto Rico. \(^{55}\) While Edward studied Spanish during his stay in Puerto Rico, becoming fluent enough to read *Ivanhoe* in that language, he always refers to San Juan as St. John’s. \(^{56}\) By choosing to use the Anglicized pronunciation, despite his knowledge of Spanish, Edward actively participated in the initial discursive colonization of Puerto Rico by the United States.

Early U.S. economic inroads into Puerto Rico were directly related to sugar, a commodity of great interest to Edward and one he mentions repeatedly in his journal, from its price at a particular time, to the need for an improvement of roads to promote travel and facilitate inland transportation, to new technological innovations implemented by U.S. plantation owners. During his visit to Mason’s plantation in a town near the capital city, Edward remarks how he noticed “the molasses on the top instead of at the bottom in the coolers, a circumstance arising from the new process adopted on this & some few neighboring estates in the preparation of sugar.” Edward then mentions how Mason is among a group of U.S. Americans who bought “the secret” from its U.S. inventor and added their own innovations with the hope that “Porto Rico sugars may be

\(^{55}\) Efrén Rivera Ramos, *The Legal Construction of Identity: The Judicial and Social Legacy of American Colonialism in Puerto Rico* (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2001), 126. Upon obtaining the island as a colony in 1898, one of the first changes effected was to the name of Puerto Rico, which became Porto Rico. Legal scholar Efrén Rivera Ramos has identified the “altered spelling” as being “symbolically significant, for it signified both the identity of the definer of the identity and the fact that it involved an act of misidentification.” This “misidentification” lasted until 1933, when the official name was changed back to Puerto Rico.

equal to St. Croix.” Edward’s journal reveals how U.S. Americans were actively engaged in improving Puerto Rico’s competitiveness as a world sugar producer well before 1898. The journal also shows that the U.S. Americans were not the only ones engaged in this process. Edward met Col. George Dawson Flinter, an officer in the British Navy who had been contracted by the Spanish crown to prepare an economic report and history of Puerto Rico in the 1830s. Identified by Edward as “an Irish man of letters & arms,” Flinter had lived in the West Indies and in South America during the early 1800s. He married a woman of Spanish descent and then obtained a commission from the Spanish crown to prepare several reports on Puerto Rico, including *An Account of the Present State of the Island of Porto Rico*, published in 1834. Flinter’s document, which catalogued the island’s economy, culture, and history, is the only one of its kind in that time period, signaling Spain’s renewed interest in exploiting its largely abandoned Caribbean colony. In his journal, Edward remarks on meeting Flinter several times and he describes the officer as devoting “his leisure to the preparation of a work on the condition & history of Porto Rico, to appear in the course of the year.”

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57 Gatell, “The Journal of Edward Bliss Emerson,” 64. A Danish colony since 1733, St. Croix’s economy was primarily focused on sugar production well into the twentieth century.

58 Ibid, 67.


60 Flinter’s report, published in 1834, was the first detailed report about the island’s economy, especially about slavery, and it became a primary source for U.S. historians producing historical accounts of Puerto Rico after 1898. See R. A. Van Middeldyk, *The History of Puerto Rico: From the Spanish Discovery to the American Occupation* (New York: D. Appleton, 1910).

in Edward’s journal between U.S. American interests in Puerto Rico and Spain’s renewed efforts to capitalize on the island’s economic possibilities show how by the 1830s Puerto Rico was, indeed, torn between empires.

Edward’s journal also shows his connection to the most significant capitalist scouts who eyed the island as a desirable investment for U.S. interests. Mason himself was a substantial player in Puerto Rico in these respects as Edward’s journal reveals. In relating a conversation with Mason, Edward says:

Mr. Mason entertained me with account of his first coming here in Jan. 20—1821—March same year left for Boston; was urged to come again by his employers Wheeler & Gay; took ½ interest in the vessel & came in June or July 1831—Settled here & has only returned to U.S. on visits since. . . When he first visited Porto Rico the business of the place was transacted in much more loose way than now. No stores were then outside of the walls or but one. —Books & memorandums & orders &c either were not kept or very irregularly.—I imagine Mr. M’s own mode of doing business has had great influence in producing the changes so far as now to be seen…

The passage suggests that Mason arrived in Puerto Rico among the first waves of U.S. Americans to settle not long after the Cédula de Gracias (roughly a Grant of Benefits) was approved by Spain in 1815. Through financial and land incentives, the Cédula encouraged the settlement of white, moneyed, Catholic immigrants from Europe and the Americas, including the United States. During the first ten months of the Cédula’s proclamation, the first to take advantage of its benefits included “83 persons from Louisiana with their slaves,” not long after Louisiana became a U.S. state in 1812.

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63 Dietz, Economic History, 21.

64 Ibid, 22.
Edward’s journal also reveals how Mason’s presence on the island was encouraged by his employer, which appears to have been some kind of U.S. investment firm in New York. By crediting Mason’s “mode of doing business” with having “great influence” in changing not only the economy, but also the economic culture in Puerto Rico, Edward promotes a positive portrayal of U.S. capitalist scouts and investors, crediting U.S. economic forces with positively altering island culture.

At the same time that Edward’s journal reveals the growing economic power of U.S. Americans in Puerto Rico, the text exposes the tensions within a transitional contact zone where different races and nationalities clashed in what Pratt categorizes as “asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”65 These asymmetries were not only in evidence between Spain and its colonial subjects, but also between U.S. Americans and the inhabitants of Puerto Rico. Edward’s journal mentions many clashes inherent to this imbalance, especially as Spain tried to control island residents, especially its African-descended population. Both in his journal and in his colonial letters, Edward remarks on the inordinate number of Spanish soldiers garrisoned on the island, which was ruled by its most repressive military governor during the time of Edward’s stay. While visiting El Morro, the impressive bay-front fort that helped repel repeated invasions in prior centuries by European nations, Edward notes: “Some 400 men are stationed there & above 200 cannon mounted . . . About 1200 [soldiers] are in the city.—These [Colonel Flinter] says are in fact rather overworked than idle, ½ being on guard duty

65 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 4.
Flinter’s comment that half of the garrison is constantly on guard duty suggests that the political situation in Puerto Rico was not as stable as colonial observers represented. In fact, Edward later complains that after taking a stroll outside the walled city of San Juan, and upon re-entering the city, a sentinel accosts him and his companion, demanding that they identify themselves. “This was the first time I have heard a passenger [passerby?] accosted thus, though it is continually occurring,” Edward remarks. This account of sentinels repeatedly accosting the U.S. Americans coming in and out of the walled city further supports the idea that the 1830s in Puerto Rico were anything but tranquil times for the decaying Spanish empire.

Although Edward does not mention any rebellions or revolts by island criollos, which were the Spanish-descended inhabitants mostly of mixed race, he repeatedly mentions instances of violence that involve the “negroes.” Interestingly, Edward’s descriptions do not distinguish between slaves and free blacks, even though slavery was not abolished in Puerto Rico until 1873. Mostly, when Edward notices the “negroes,” he represents them either as engaged in what he describes as their annoying brand of entertainment or in acts of violence. His remarks are often about how they “assembled on the rampart for a dance” and played music “peculiar to their nations,” or complaints that the “clatter of congos & rattles by [which] the negroes enliven their dances is very annoying to those who love quiet nights.” Edward acknowledges the illegal slave trade by including mention in his journal that “Night before last I am told 70 or 80 negroes

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67 Ibid, 67, 75.
were landed here from a Guinea man; the illicit trade being still connived at.”

However, Edward does not record any judgment or opinion of this illegal trade, although Flinter himself suggested in his report that the continued importation of slaves from Africa was the single most potentially explosive problem for Puerto Rico. Edward does not refer to these “negroes,” or to any of the others he mentions in his journal, as slaves, and he does not discuss Puerto Rico slavery in comparison to U.S. slavery, even when directly addressing the illegal sale of people stolen from Africa. This silence hints at the possibility that, like Sophia Peabody in Cuba, Edward was not particularly interested in, nor felt strongly about, the issue of slavery.

His repeated mention of “negroes” involved in violent actions, however, does suggest that, like Flinter and the Spanish colonial administration, Edward perceived the “negroes” as dangerous elements in the contact zone. The anxiety that suffuses Edward’s journal unveils the fissures in the colonial narrative that portrayed slaves as meek and submissive. In the past few decades, Puerto Rican historians have revealed that slaves rebelled and threatened the colonial government so frequently between 1821 and 1826 that the crown that year issued a new *Reglamento de Esclavos para Puerto Rico*

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69 Flinter, *An account*, viii. In the preface to his report, Flinter says that “the accumulating numbers of these uneducated negroes, let loose on the island among the free blacks and slaves, already too numerous, is introducing a mass contagion which may produce most calamitous consequences.” Raising the specter of the 1791 Haitian Revolution, Flinter continues by saying: “The security of the lives and properties of the white inhabitants depends on the total cessation of the slave trade; for every black or coloured man who lands on their shore is, and must necessarily be, their irreconcilable enemy, as long as that trade continues to exist.” Flinter goes on to state that “the white population of Cuba and Puerto Rico at this moment have every thing at stake.”

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[Regulations for Slaves in Puerto Rico]. The more restrictive and Draconian regulations, however, did not prevent subsequent, if minor, slave rebellions in 1828 and 1833. Supporting historical accounts of pervasive slave rebelliousness in Puerto Rico, Edward remarks: “Today I have seen 3 negroes with fetters & a huge log on their shoulders attached to them to prevent their running away & to punish their repeated attempts to do so;—two others saw in the stocks, sitting easily but with one foot made fast.”

Severe physical punishment, Edward suggests with little emotion (especially compared to Mary Peabody’s reactions to the torture of Cuban slaves that I discuss in Chapter 2), is needed as a preventative measure and as retribution for the slaves’ continued attempts to escape. Earlier in his journal, Edward describes how he heard the “account of [a] negro coming with sword & pistol & giving disturbance in his entry last [evening]. Result may be death of negro but [that] is uncertain.” The disturbance of a “negro” carrying a sword and pistol upon his entry into the city and his possible death unsettles Edward’s own, otherwise peaceful and racially white, life in San Juan. In another entry Edward mentions that he:

saw a violent battle between a negro… & a cook … Mr. Mason & others succeeded in parting the combatants, before the arrival of some other negroes who were hastening to aid their countrymen [sic], & might have done harm with their short swords—These latter instruments are strangely enough allowed to be put in the hands of the blacks & are very commonly seen, especially in the country . . . Yet the law makes a negro lose his land if he raise it against a white man…

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72 Ibid, 70, 73.
In this passage, Edward appears to make a slip (corrected by Gatell) by using “countrymen” instead of “countryman” when describing how other “negroes” hastened to help the one being attacked. But perhaps the slip is unconscious because he perceives the “negroes” as all being his national Others, and “countrymen” in the same sense as U.S. Americans. I find it revealing, however, that Edward does not specify whether the negroes are countrymen because they are African or because they are Puerto Rican. Perhaps, for Edward, their race trumped their nationality, making it irrelevant. Edward does not say who might have been harmed by the fact that the other “negroes” who intervened were armed with swords, but we can assume by the tone of the passage that he had more than a little anxiety for his own safety.

Not only is it significant that each account of an African-descended person in Puerto Rico causing a disturbance ends with some mention of death or other physical punishment but that, in his representations, Edward does not distinguish between slaves and free blacks on the island. In the passage above, Edward considers it strange that “negroes” are allowed to carry swords, even if they are free (as this case suggests given that slaves could not be armed). Unlike Spanish officials, who strictly controlled the African-descended population but also discriminated between enslaved and free blacks, Edward groups them all under the category of “negroes.” Edward’s observations also are revealing especially given historical data that shows the number of slaves in Puerto Rico was at its highest, between ten and eleven percent of the population, from 1820 to 1854.73 Anticipating how, upon U.S. colonization, U.S. racist attitudes would recast into black

73 Baralt, Esclavos rebeldes, 78.
and white the population of an island where the mixing of different races had created a variety of skin tones, Edward applies only one racial category to Puerto Rican blacks, regardless of their position in society. In the same way that U.S. Americans exerted an early discursive power in renaming Puerto Rico as Porto Rico, Edward exerts his own type of colonial power by discursively subordinating the “negroes” of Puerto Rico into a U.S. category of representation.

These representations of the pervasive repression of African-descended peoples, and the military muscle that Spain felt necessary to flex in San Juan to keep the colonial population under control, contradict Edward’s representation of Puerto Rico as “a docile child” resting in the bosom of the Spanish sovereigns. Although Edward is in Puerto Rico during the worst military repression by the Spanish colonial regime, in his journal and in his colonial letters he consistently represents the people of Puerto Rico as fun-loving colonials, perfectly content with Spanish rule and celebrating one festival after another. In his journal, Edward records several holidays and festive events during the month of June 1831, many of which were attended by the Spanish military governor, Miguel de la Torre. After a particularly long period of festivities, Edward remarks that while people have “resumed their customary labors . . . the Spirit of diversion does not seem to have left them for while I write I hear the violin somewhere in the neighborhood, & the folk seem on tiptoe for St. Peter’s approaching holiday when masks are to be worn, as a new variety of sport . . .”74 When the masked festivities are held later in July,

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Edward finds the maskers to be “rather disagreeable…& [their] gate & demeanor either foolish or insipid.” Further, Edward wonders:

that the Governor (who sat in the Square with his Suite looking at the Show) has consented at the request of a delegation of the masked to permit the people a continuance of this mode of diversion until the 30th of this coming month; since without such special consent it would have ended yesterday.\footnote{This and the preceding quotations are from Gatell, “The Journal of Edward Bliss Emerson,” 68, 70.}

De la Torre, who became infamous as the worst military governor in Puerto Rico’s history, governed the island between 1823 and 1837. In addition to his repressive measures aimed at thwarting all opposition, de la Torre established a governing policy based on his belief that: “While the people have fun, they don’t think about conspiring.”

De la Torre boasted that he ruled Puerto Rico under the three B’s, baile (dancing), botella (drinking) and baraja (card games).\footnote{De la Torre, who was appointed governor in Puerto Rico after his defeat at the hands of Bolívar in the Battle of Carabobo in 1821, had vowed that Puerto Rico would not fall the way that Venezuela and all the other Latin American colonies had fallen.} Edward’s journal provides evidence of the effectiveness of de la Torre’s policies, making his own surprise that the governor consented to the month-long festivities ironic given de la Torre’s expressed intent to keep the people dancing, drinking and gambling so they would have no time or energy to conspire against Spain.

Edward also establishes a clear binary opposition between the identity of Puerto Rico residents, as he constructs it, and his own New England identity. From his very arrival in Puerto Rico in April 1831, Edward begins to promote this contrast between his native home and this contact zone. His chosen binary is not only about place, but also
about national identity, whereby he constructs the people of Puerto Rico as opposites to New Englanders and, by extension, to U.S. Americans.\textsuperscript{77} In establishing New England as the synonym for the larger nation, Edward also contributes to the discourses that had established his own region as superior to any other parts of the United States, a discursive move that he then extends extra-continentally. The first things he notices as he gets off the ship and begins to walk through the city are the “friars in the streets,” a “cafe with billiards & groups of loungers,” “ill odors rushing from the doors & courtyards,” and no “bookstores, but several variety shops—& chocolate & grocery stores.” The city thus emerges in his journal as visibly Catholic and foul-smelling, with inhabitants more interested in amusing themselves and lounging than in reading. Still, Edward states that the “good nature” of the people “prevails & atones to one of my turn for [the] want of cleanliness & polish.”\textsuperscript{78} In this first description of the island’s people, Edward represents their nature as easy-going, which makes up for what they lack in clean living and sophistication to someone of his “turn” or disposition. From the start, Edward thus establishes a clear rift and asymmetry between his own personal sensibilities and those of this colonial people and place.

Edward’s private musings about the differentiation between New England/himself and the people of Puerto Rico make it into his early letters home with a twist: an

\textsuperscript{77} The Emersons do not refer to the people of Puerto Rico as Puerto Ricans. Thus, I use their same terminology of inhabitants and residents to avoid altering the meaning of the representations the Emersons made. Arguments about the inability of the colonized to self-govern or to produce high intellectual work are staples of Orientalist colonial discourses. Edward W. Said argued that the “essential ideas about the Orient [were based on] its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness . . . [its] degeneracy, and inequality with the West.” See Said, \textit{Orientalism} (New York: Random House, 1994), 205, 206.

\textsuperscript{78} This and the preceding quotation are from Gatell, “The Journal of Edward Bliss Emerson,” 64.
apparently ironic discussion about the possibility of “learning” from the people in the colonial contact zone. In October 1831 he writes to his step-grandfather, the Rev. Ezra Ripley, and states: “You are aware I suppose that this island like a docile child follows the mother country, & rests in the bosom of the Catholic Church.” After remarking how he enjoys “the repose & liberty” of his Sundays in Puerto Rico because no one expects him at service and no one would censure him for failing to attend Mass, Edward adds that he “forgets to regret” that he will not be taking a seat in the congregation. The contact zone, Edward reveals, allows him a freedom from strict religious observance that would be impossible in New England and which enables him to elide the fact that there are no religious expectations placed on him in this colonial space. Edward follows this confession by suggesting that “Every man may learn something from every other man, & perhaps every sect much from every other sect.” But Edward goes on to describe an exchange of lessons in the contact zone that does not put the two cultures on equal terms:

> While the Catholics of St. Johns might learn in New England to show their respect for the Sabbath by a more general suspension of labor & traffic than is here observed, I think the religionists of the north might also learn in Porto Rico the advantage of admitting relaxation & some amusement to enter into their holy time.\(^79\)

The freedom from religious strictures, which Puerto Rico offers Edward, propitiates in him a degree of cultural relativism that operates in what he perceives as his own and his culture’s benefit. This is especially so because while the Catholics in San Juan would have to learn from their Protestant counterparts to suspend work and commerce in the Sabbath, the overly uptight Calvinists of the north would only have to admit some

\(^79\) This and the preceding quotation are from Bosco and Myerson, *The Emerson Brothers*, 27, 28.
relaxation and amusement into their worship. As Edward describes it, the exchange would definitely be easier on New Englanders because they already have the upper hand.

In what Gatell describes as honesty, Edward suggests to his Protestant reader that New England “religionists” (ostensibly like his reverend step-grandfather) might learn a thing or two about diversion from the Catholics in Puerto Rico. But Edward’s purpose seems neither perfectly honest nor ambivalent but ultimately ironic, because at the same time that he suggests that Protestants might derive some benefit from how Puerto Rico inhabitants mark their Sundays, the only activities he mentions as preferred by island people are gambling, drunkenness and open commerce on “the Sabbath.” In that same letter, Edward says:

If we could exclude cock fighting, house scouring, occasional drunken follies, some labor in the country required during the mornings, & much of the marketing & shopkeeping carried out on the city from the Sundays here, & if in the other . . . the prohibitions laid, by custom or precept, upon innocent diversion or pleasant conversation . . . could be removed from the New England Sunday – the Sabbath might be better used and valued in both places.\(^\text{80}\)

While Edward’s initial acknowledgement that strict Calvinists might learn a thing or two from Catholics reflects what Gatell identifies as Edward’s open-mindedness, his chosen examples contradict and derail this ostensible purpose. Gambling, drunkenness and trade are not obvious choices that would persuade any northern “religionist” to loosen up the stricures placed on “pleasant conversation and innocent diversion” among New England Protestants. Surely, Edward was keenly aware of the Calvinist fear that “loosening” stricures could degenerate into openly irreligious behavior. What I read as irony, then,

\(^{80}\) Bosco and Myerson, *The Emerson Brothers*, 28.
serves to establish that Edward’s implication is that while New Englanders might learn something from this contact zone, the only value of that knowledge is in what it provides in entertainment and moral relaxation. While his ultimate purpose in suggesting that New Englanders would “loosen up” from cross-cultural exposure in the contact zone might be unclear, it is decidedly not ambivalent. In this colonial letter, Edward clearly suggests that Puerto Rico residents would be the ones to learn how to “better use and value” their Sabbath after exposure to Protestant influence.

Along with the binary that Edward establishes in his letters between New England and Puerto Rico, he begins to anticipate the ideals of Manifest Destiny by discursively appropriating the hemisphere and suggesting that Puerto Rico’s salvation might lie in the hands of the United States. In a November 13, 1833 letter to Ralph Waldo, Edward writes: “I welcome you home again; that is to the Western Hemisphere, to the new world of Columbus, for at least within such limits our straggling fortunes are again united.”81 By referring to the Western Hemisphere as “home,” by appropriating the New World as his own and by articulating the hemisphere as limited and bounded but as uniting the two U.S. brothers in their “straggling fortunes,” Edward introduces some of the concepts that Manifest Destiny would turn into U.S. cultural commonplaces a few years later. These ideals included a sense of ownership over the entire Western Hemisphere and of entitlement to its resources. In a letter that similarly anticipates the mission of Manifest Destiny, Edward writes to Ralph Waldo on June 29, 1834, in ways that suggest a

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connection between his own individual salvation at the hand of God and Puerto Rico’s salvation at the hands of the United States. In that letter, Edward says:

My moral powers I was about to say – but no, there is never a moment when these ought not to be in exercise – what I would say, is that the provinces of sentiment, of fancy, of pure intellect, the regions of thoughts, the mines where reason labors & sifts the mountains where speculation climbs, all these I seem to contemplate as a past of my domain lying a far distance off - unvisited almost by a glance, - oh, that the fallow ground may one day render in at least the great Land lord’s [sic] interests. 82

Again, Edward promotes the binary opposition between the elegant (as opposed to passionate) sentiment, speculative intellect, rational thought, and prevailing reason that he associates with New England, and their polar opposites, which he identifies with Puerto Rico. We can read Edward’s concluding remark as his own parting prayer that his “fallow ground,” a biblical metaphor for the soul ready to be cultivated by God, will ultimately render what is in God’s interest. But we also can interpret Edward’s prayer as describing Puerto Rico as the “fallow ground” in need of the Protestant guidance of the United States to “one day render” in the interests of God. The choice of “land lord” to describe God’s power evokes the images of the actual possession and ownership of the land in Puerto Rico, which the United States would eventually acquire. The fact that we can read the passage as referring both to Edward and to Puerto Rico is important because it again resonates with the mission of Manifest Destiny, especially as Ralph Waldo first envisioned it in terms of the role of an “American Scholar.” This imperialist ideal represented the United States, nationally, and U.S. Americans, individually, as responsible for rendering extra-territorial “fallow grounds” in God’s name both for the

82 Edward Bliss Emerson to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 29 June 1834. MS Am 1280.226 (Letter 222), Emerson Papers. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge.
nation’s own and for the potential colonies’ salvation. In this letter, Edward conflates the personal and the national while simultaneously acknowledging that his known “domain” of New England is in his past while Puerto Rico has become his present domain, albeit one much in need of salvation.

Ultimately for Edward, the difference between New England and Puerto Rico is one based on intellect and nature, not nurture. In his journal, Edward notes how “Men do not strive here as in N[ew] E[ngland] after the perfect man. It is present pastime or gainful industry or chance which they follow as their stars.” While Puerto Rico may be the “fallow ground” where U.S. Americans might find their fortune, the island remains a site where philosophical or moral perfection is unattainable for those who do not already possess it because its inhabitants are more interested in entertaining themselves. This “perfect man,” a notion that resonates with Ralph Waldo’s fashioning of “Man Thinking” in the “American Scholar,” is not to be found in the colonial contact zone where the United States has had no influence. Edward, for one, complains in his journal that “the only celebration of our glorious anniversary” on July 4, 1831 was “the display of the national flag at the masthead of the [American] vessels in port.” He expresses happiness for having received “some good newspapers from Boston with an honorable account of the celebrations of 4, July,” and these accounts make him “rejoice & makes me respect Boston still [as] the land of steady habits, the city of the sensible, the intelligent . . .” The understated binary is that San Juan, the city where the fourth of July was not marked by

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83 See Ralph Waldo Emerson, The American Scholar, 18-9, 38, 50. This “Man Thinking” is “the world’s eye. He is the world’s heart,” and it is on this American Scholar that “this confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation . . .”
any special celebration (although he does not wonder why this should be so), is not the city of the sensible and the intelligent. After reading Puerto Rico’s one available history book (the eighteenth-century account by Spanish Friar Inigo Abbad y la Sierra), Edward is convinced that his impressions are factual: “Porto Rico has changed much since the historian finished his work in 1786—but it has changed as a boy changes with his growth but is the same individual in features outward & intellectual. . .”84 In promoting this intellectual opposition between New England and Puerto Rico, Edward represents U.S. Americans as men who seek moral and intellectual perfection while Puerto Rico residents are infantilized as boys who may grow height-wise but who remain stagnant in their intellectual and moral faculties. Completely absent from Edward’s gendered construction both of U.S. Americans and of the Puerto Ricans is the female figure, whether girl, woman, or mother, so that in his vision it is the intellectual, civilizing men who appropriate a nurturing educational role that wholly sidesteps the question of maternal influence.

Edward again transfers this gendered representation of the contact zone from his journals into his colonial letters. In a letter of April 5, 1834 to his aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, Edward notes how “the apathy & the no less remarkable ignorance of the people aid in rendering the solitude of an educated man more complete.”85 Edward goes further to mention how “the childish frivolity of the amusements of the place will disgust rather than tempt our supposed recluse,” and he adds that “a religious or moral

84 All quotations from Edward’s journal are from Gatell, “The Journal of Edward Bliss Emerson,” 69, 71, 75.

philosopher” would find Puerto Rico “too much for his patience, too much for his tranquility to bear the sight of so general laxity and too much for his skill or power to remedy.” The “wrongs” of the infantile inhabitants of Puerto Rico, Edward suggests, are too entrenched and long-standing to correct. Again, unlike Mary Peabody, who worried about the corruptive effect on U.S. Americans of the contact zone in Cuba, Edward dismisses such concerns by noting how these amusements in Puerto Rico are more likely to disgust rather than tempt. In his dual role as colonial scout and intellectual observer, who trains a largely unsympathetic eye on Puerto Rico and interprets it largely through that lens, Edward deploys the type of strategic innocence that Pratt defines as the “anti-conquest.” While he does not directly advocate for the U.S. colonization of Puerto Rico, he repeatedly exerts a cultural and discursive hegemony over Puerto Rico. Edward’s colonial letters show that it was not only the hegemonic “European improving eye” that was bent on recasting colonial contact zones, but that by the 1830s the male U.S. American colonial gaze was also very much at play in such spaces.  

“**This sensual Paradise**: Charles Chauncy Emerson’s Puerto Rico

More so than Edward, Charles’ writings on Puerto Rico respond to the strategies of representation of the anti-conquest in the contact zone. Charles directly and repeatedly declares his innocence as an intellectual observer by separating himself from what Pratt describes as “overtly imperial articulations of conquest, conversion, territorial appropriation, and enslavement.” Still, like Edward, Charles gazes at Puerto Rico

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86 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 61.
through his U.S. lens and takes possession of the island, acting as the colonial “seeing man” whom Pratt identifies as “he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess.”

I expand on Pratt’s categories to argue that Charles personifies this imperial seeing man as an intellectual, not only as a capitalist scout, a naturalist or a travel writer. In this manner, Charles anticipates and influences the ideals that Ralph Waldo had in mind when he crafted his notion of the American Scholar’s ability to stand his ground and wait until the whole world came round to him. Indeed, Charles takes the stance of this proto-American Scholar a step further than Edward. For Charles, the intellectual rift between Puerto Rico and New England is so immense that he does not see any areas in which U.S. culture might learn from Puerto Rico’s. Further, Charles’ imperial eyes are mostly cast upon his natural environs, and much less than Edward’s upon the activities of the native people. Unlike Edward, whose writings reveal his capitalist scouting, Charles represents himself purely as an intellectual engaged in colonial envisioning. While he does not acknowledge any financial stake in the contact zone, he clearly longs to take non-violent possession of the land in Puerto Rico. In keeping with what Pratt describes as “textual apartheid” in European naturalist and travel writings, Charles also separates the landscape from the people, focusing his interest almost absorbedly on the former.

Because the land is his particular interest, Charles finds that the city is too alien an environment to enjoy himself, unlike his brother who spent most of his time in San Juan and seemed to like living there. Too crowded and noisy, the city offends Charles’

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87 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 38, 7.
88 Ibid, 61.
intellectual sensibilities and he quickly chooses to withdraw to Mason’s country home and
spends most of his visit there. In the excerpts of his journal, published posthumously
by Ralph Waldo in *The Dial*, Charles echoes Edward’s impressions when he complains
that in “the city there is no peace. We are kept awake half the night by a negro ball, with
its endless *ya, ya*, whilst those evenings which lack this diversion are supplied with lesser
melodies of guitar, or songs of children begging guirlandas.” Like Edward before him,
Charles remarks on the noisy city, made especially noisy by the “negros.” Charles
confesses that he “felt homesick” in the city, once “the novelty was a little worn off” and
that he not only tired of living “within those massive walls” but that he felt “like a
prisoner . . . forever under the eye of sentinel.” Here again we find a representation,
though Charles admits to its emotional effects more openly than Edward does, of the
repressive atmosphere maintained by Spanish authorities in the capital city. Like
Edward’s, the impressions that Charles first penned in his journal made it into the
colonial letters that he sent home to his relatives. In one of his first letters to Ralph
Waldo, dated December 23, 1831, Charles notes how, “The talk, tho’ not understood, &
lively action of the people in the streets, chiefly blacks and poor Spaniards, is a continual
entertainment.” Promoting the idea of the contact zone as a space of entertainment,
Charles marks the linguistic, cultural, racial and national difference of the people he
encounters, and suggests that even if there is no affinity between him and those he
observes, the visit is nonetheless valuable because it is amusing.

89 This and the preceding quotation are from Charles Chauncy Emerson, “A Leaf from ‘A Voyage to Puerto Rico,’” 524.

The representation of Puerto Rico residents as lively, peaceable and hospitable thus becomes a theme in the Emersons’ letters, which promotes the notion that the inhabitants gladly and lazily acquiesced to a repressive colonial governance. In a letter to Ralph Waldo on January 9, 1832, Charles first admits to having had “somewhat of a prejudice against Porto Rico” upon his arrival and then describes the “little lively city” as “picturesque” and as smelling “like an orange, in the midst of the glorious scenery I have described to you more than once – while the inhabitants instead of knives & pistols wore the most peaceable garb in the world, & had a smile & greeting even for the stranger.” Charles’ description of the Puerto Rico residents as not wearing weapons contrasts with his subsequent comment about the garrison “of 1200 whiskered [Spanish] soldados, with mortars.” His representations also contrast with Edward’s own anxieties about the violent encounters involving “negroes” that he hears of and witnesses in the city. As I have mentioned, while Puerto Rico was coveted by many European powers that had routinely tried to invade and wrest the island from Spain since the sixteenth century, the garrison of soldiers mostly served to police and suppress any separatist or reformist ideas among the Puerto Rican criollos and the slaves. The separatist struggle in Puerto Rico, which was severely repressed during the de la Torre years, is not addressed in the Emersons’ extant correspondence.

Also like Edward, Charles infantilizes the inhabitants in Puerto Rico when he sets them in opposition to New England and to himself, but he is more negative than Edward, who thinks that U.S. influence would improve the islanders. For Charles, the people are

innately corrupted, “a growth” that could not survive in the New England climate. In a letter of January 15, 1832 to Reverend Ripley, Charles writes:

The men & women are a growth we could no more raise in New England, than we could oranges or bananas. They are spoiled children, grown up – Without any early education, & leading a life whose whole office it is to supply the desires of the body, shut out from all part in the public affairs, with no cultivated society, or circulation of knowledge, they naturally ripen into indolent, ignorant, untrustworthy, irreligious people – good humored & courteous when not irritated or crossed; but easily enraged, & like most weak persons, prone to be jealous.\(^{92}\)

The fact that the people are “easily enraged” is dismissed by Charles as unimportant since such rage is in no way threatening, being rather another sign of mental and emotional weakness. One wonders how many Puerto Rico natives Charles actually came into contact with given that he did not speak or understand Spanish and that his stay of four months on the island was spent living among fellow U.S. Americans. Nonetheless, he is quick to describe all Puerto Rico inhabitants as sensual, indolent, apolitical and uneducated. Charles rather self-consciously qualifies his derogatory statements, noting: “I ought to say however that they treat a stranger very kindly, & that I find them better than I should have thought. . .” But even while qualifying his evident disdain, Charles represents Puerto Rico’s inhabitants as so docile that they continue to treat him kindly even when he thinks so poorly of them.

Charles expresses his colonial superiority not only by infantilizing the people of Puerto Rico, but also by engaging in anti-conquest strategies of representation and setting himself apart from older colonialisms. In comparing his old and new “domains,” Charles’ colonial letters make intriguing connections between his own travel to Puerto

\(^{92}\) Ibid, 286.
Rico and the colonial projects of the Pilgrims and Spain, including that of Columbus, whom Edward mentions only briefly. In his earliest letter dated December 23, 1831, Charles describes to Ralph Waldo how he planted his “foot on foreign soil” on “the anniversary of the Pilgrim Landing.” Charles’ connection of the Pilgrims’ Landing in Plymouth, Massachusetts, with his arrival in Puerto Rico establishes a parallel between the 1620 colonial project in New England and his own nineteenth-century Caribbean sojourn. Charles seems to echo the Pilgrims when he states that “though the features of the country were strange, yet the mere rest of the eye upon solid land and green vegetation, was refreshing.”93 Such echoes continue as Charles notes how “my feelings of recognition & familiarity died all away” as he is confronted with a completely unfamiliar language and culture. Charles then notes how Puerto Rico is as much “mundo nuevo” to him in the 1830s as it was to the Spanish Crown in the fifteenth century, suggesting that he also is some kind of discoverer. Using the two words in Spanish to describe this new place, Charles draws a parallel between himself and the “decayed” Spanish Empire that he will later disavow in this and other letters. Charles adds that what he finds in Puerto Rico is “exactly what you would expect to have made out of a delightful climate, and commercial spirit acting on the colony of a decayed empire on a people who want the principle of civilization.”94 A cursory reading proposes that we understand Charles to mean that Puerto Rico residents lack the basic principles of civilization. But his choice of words also suggests that the inhabitants might “want,” or

93 This and the preceding quotation are from Gatell, “New England Eyes,” 283.

94 Charles Chauncy Emerson to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 23 December 1831. MS Am 1280.226 (Letter 100), Emerson Papers. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge.
desire, the principles of U.S. civilization, whose foundation in its dominant expression is traced back to the Pilgrims he previously mentioned.

By immediately noticing, upon setting foot in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, that there is a lack of civilization among the inhabitants of this *mundo nuevo* (which is only new to him because it has been a Spanish colony for almost four hundred years), Charles positions himself on the same footing as the Pilgrims, who along with the Puritans embody the foundational narrative of U.S. American-ness. Charles locates himself as superior to the Puerto Rico inhabitants because he not only can discern their uncivilized nature but, by implication, he also possesses the true civilizing principles. In this way, and very much like Ralph Waldo’s “American Scholar” would, Charles represents himself not only as the intellectual “discoverer” of a new land, but also as a potential “civilizer,” a power that he associates solely with the United States, and not with the centuries-old Catholic Spanish colonialism. Charles concludes that letter after writing about the beauty of the Puerto Rican mountains by stating: “I no longer wondered at the sanguine dreams & the poetic pomp which filled Columbus’ soul, & burned in his descriptions of the world he discovered.”

Although the land upon which Charles gazes is not remotely similar, especially in San Juan and its environs, to what it was when Columbus first “discovered” it, Charles recasts himself as a similar type of discoverer who might just share in the older colonial dreams and imperial poetics. Charles thus imagines how Columbus felt before him, upon gazing at similar vistas, and he articulates an understanding of colonially inflected desire, representation and interpretation.

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However, in another early letter of December 1831 written to his aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, Charles engages in anti-conquest strategies by directly differentiating himself from James Cook, who stumbled onto the Hawaiian Islands in 1778, and also from Columbus. In that letter Charles states:

I am no statesman charged with the interests of a nation – no Cook nor Columbus going out to seek new territory for civilization – no missionary bound on an errand which absorbs his soul – not even a merchant, tributizing wind & wave to my private gains, but I am a simple citizen in search of all the good I can get out of all things.  

Charles’ insistence to his aunt that he is different from the Spanish and English colonial agents, including the “discoverer,” the missionary, and the trader, is part of a fledgling U.S. anti-conquest rhetoric, especially because he describes himself, innocently, as “a simple citizen.” Charles thus articulates the distinction between the old European colonialisms that sought to conquer, convert and exploit, and what he casts as a more innocent and benevolent colonial vision based on ideas of individual prosperity and citizenship.

In setting himself apart from the traditional agents of empire through the strategies of the anti-conquest, Charles anticipates the ways in which the United States would, only a few years later, articulate the difference between its own colonial project and that of its European predecessors. While he admires Columbus’ adventure of discovery and the poetics of colonialism that Columbus first expressed, Charles anticipates what would become a discourse of the newly minted U.S. empire: its difference from the old empires of Europe. In 1898, for instance, the U.S. project of

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96 Bosco and Myerson, *The Emerson Brothers*, 155.
empire in Puerto Rico and Cuba cloaked itself with the language of republican democracy and freedom, promising the liberation of the islands from Spanish colonial rule and extension of the benefits and rights of living under the protection of a democratic republic. Charles envisions himself not as a derivation of the old empires that came before him but as clearly different from Cook, Columbus, and their religious and commercial counterparts. Instead, Charles positions himself as an innocent citizen of the United States, who seeks to obtain “all the good” that can be had from “all things.” The colonial undertones may be subtle but still identifiable as Charles feels entitled to whatever benefit can be had from “all things,” even those to which he does not have any actual right or claim in another country.

The strategy of the anti-conquest and Charles’ obsession with representing himself as an innocent observer as opposed to a violent conqueror is even more evident when Charles refers to Francisco Pizarro, the Spanish conquistador who conquered the Inca Empire in Peru. In that same letter to his aunt, Charles writes:

> You remember the epitaph on Pizarro – which tells of his power, wealth, success, & closes thus “Reader, art thou poor, art humble, Dost thou earn thy daily bread by daily labor, Thank the God that made thee, thou art not like Pizarro.” Even so say I to this luxurious region. I thank the God who made me to grow up on the rugged soil, & beneath the bleak heavens of

97 Kal Wagenheim and Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim, *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 95-96. The Wagenheims note how four days after Gen. Nelson A. Miles landed on Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898, he issued a proclamation, which was the first official public statement from the U.S. government with regard to its plans for Puerto Rico. In his speech, Miles said that “the people of the United States in the cause of liberty, justice, and humanity, [through] its military forces have come to occupy the Island of Puerto Rico. They come bearing the banner of freedom, inspired by noble purpose to seek the enemies of our country and yours . . . They bring you the fostering arm of a nation of free people, whose greater power is in justice and humanity to all those living within its fold . . . We have not come to make war against a people of a country that for centuries have been oppressed, but, on the contrary, to bring you protection . . . to promote your prosperity, and to bestow upon you the immunities and blessings of the liberal institutions of our government.”
New England – The purity of her snows is better than the Cyprian atmosphere of this sensual Paradise - & knowledge & truth to be had without money & without price, is a richer plenty than all the gorgeous feast which outward Nature here spreads for a race in whom the animal mounts above the intellectual & crushes the religious principle.\textsuperscript{98}

In distancing himself from the Spanish colonizers who came to the Americas to take the land and enrich themselves, Charles states that he is notifying “this luxurious region” of that difference so it need not fear any violent colonial intentions from him. Charles thus articulates not only a recognition of colonial desire but also a wariness about the toll of the colonial project on the colonizer. Charles chooses to express this awareness in overtly sexual and racialized language, referring to Puerto Rico as a “Cyprian” or licentious environment, a “sensual Paradise” where Nature offers a “gorgeous feast” to “a race for whom the animal mounts” and destroys all intellectual and religious “principles.” Charles thereby establishes the New England Protestant ethic of “purity, knowledge and truth,” which has no price and cannot be purchased, as a loftier wealth than what the potential colony offers in sexual terms. The image of the animal side of people “mounting” their intellectual abilities is quite graphic and surprising in a letter to his aunt. Ultimately, Charles appears to suggest that while the colony, as is, might be desirable, it cannot be ultimately possessed until its animalistic nature has been domesticated by U.S. Protestant “intellectual and religious principles.”

Unlike Edward, who does not seem all that interested in the land except as it is related to capitalist development and gain, Charles is more the naturalist, fixating on the landscape and describing it with keen and desirous eyes. The poetics of colonial

sensuality evident in Charles’ representations compare to the rhetorical choices that Sophia Peabody made when representing Cuba, since she also focused mostly on the aesthetics of the landscape, as I discuss in Chapter 2. In his published journal excerpt, Charles notes how every morning he gets up and rides his pony “to the tops of the hills that overlook the country” where he can “feast my eyes with the carpet landscape rolled out beneath my feet.” This carpet rolled out for his convenience is made up of “thousands of acres of cane-fields,” as well as “vast savannahs where the wandering eye,/ Unfixed, is in a verdant ocean lost.” The last two lines of that passage are excerpts from eighteenth-century British poet James Thomson’s long nature poem The Seasons (1730), specifically from the verses dedicated to summer. As an early expression of Orientalism, Thomson’s poem reflected the growing scientific and economic approach to nature in the eighteenth century and did so by imagining and appropriating nature throughout the globe. I find it interesting that Charles recurs to an eighteenth-century British poem, one with clear Orientalist overtones, to express his feelings upon gazing upon the land in Puerto Rico. Charles uses Thomson’s poem, like the poet did imaginatively before him, to express how he can materially gaze at these “vast savannahs” and “verdant oceans” to appropriate them as his own.

While Charles expresses colonial desire for the land of the contact zone, there is also a sense that what this landscape offers is ultimately inferior to his New England views. When Charles uses the language of possession, even of an illegal possession, it is


with the desire to improve his native landscape, such as when he states: “The palm is the only tree I would steal for our own scenery. Much of the beauty and almost the whole of the peculiar character of the landscape comes from that single magnificent vegetable.” Although Charles finds more “luster in the atmosphere and a vigor in the vegetation beyond what nature attains in our latitudes,” he also finds “a drowsiness over all the landscape: there are no bright contrasts of colors; few insects are on the wing; the birds have no song, and we miss the brilliant variety and the high spirits of a northern summer.”

Anyone familiar with the brilliancy of the tropical landscape (including insects and birds) must find this account surprising and perhaps rather disingenuous, more like a wish that it be so rather than a description of reality. In this published excerpt of his journal, Charles seems to try hard to maintain the superiority of New England. He chooses words meant to demean and highlight excess rather than to praise and exult as when he says: “Many flowers … are among the most common weeds. Sensitive plants … overrun the ground, and the ipecachuanha grows wild in profusion.” Common weeds overrunning the ground does not sound like a description of a landscape to be desired.

The weeds notwithstanding, the solitude and proximity of the lush natural surroundings seduce Charles and within that same excerpt he admits to feeling like a king, a representation that resonates with Sophia Peabody’s self-fashioning as a queen in Cuba, which I discuss in the next chapter.

Charles cannot help himself and must

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101 This and the preceding quotation are from Charles Chauncy Emerson, “A Leaf from ‘A Voyage to Puerto Rico,’” 525.

102 The fact that both Charles and Sophia were infirm, one suffering from tuberculosis and the other from disabling migraines, suggests that the metaphor of monarchy provided them with a kind of psychological
express his admiration toward the tropical landscape, especially what he sees in Santa Barbara, Mason’s plantation. Once there, Charles describes Mason’s house as looking “like one of our northern barn,” but he says that this “barn is like Cinderella’s pumpkin.” Charles adds: “For I have only to open the shutters and let down the sides of the building, which turn on hinges, and the beauty of the fields and the glory of the skies and mountains pour in, and my shed becomes a palace.”

The deployment of the Cinderella story, in which a poor girl is turned into a princess, just like a humble pumpkin is turned into a luxurious carriage, seems intriguing when used by Charles to describe his experience in the contact zone. The Puerto Rico landscape acts as Charles’ fairy godmother, turning Mason’s “barn” (probably more like a large Spanish-style country mansion) into a palace where Charles may hold court. I also find it interesting that the contact zone feminizes Charles into a Cinderella-type status that underlines his innocence and guilelessness.

The contact zone not only leads Charles to envision himself as a king, but in that fashion, it also leads him to see the landscape as his personal possession, “spread out beneath my feet.” The language of sensual pleasure and possession is again found in a January 9, 1832 letter to Reverend Ripley in which Charles describes his visit to Mason’s plantation, which was located about five miles from San Juan. Charles writes:

oh the beauty & fatness of the land! I feasted on it as on some delicious fruit. Spread out beneath my feet, was valley of thousands of acres – cane-fields & pasture-lands, a sheet of living green, with lofty cocoas &

compensation, one that enabled their self-conception as the highest ranking person of their respective genders.

palmetto trees standing about like sentinels, & giving an air of stately repose to the whole.\textsuperscript{104}

In this excerpt, the Puerto Rican land is not only represented as beautiful but also as “fat,” conjuring the image of voluptuousness and leading Charles to, in uncharacteristic hyperbole, express how he consumed the sight as if it were a fruit, connecting the visual experience with a sensual and erotic experience of possession and consumption. This representation is a shift for Charles, who starts by casting himself as an innocent observer, and then a discoverer, both of which suggest more passive roles, but who here represents himself as a willing and active consumer of the resources the island has to offer. The palm trees that he admired in his journal “stand sentinel” to his abode, which in contrast to the noisy, busy city, is suffused with “an air of stately repose.” These same cane fields and pasture lands that Charles so openly covets became the main resources of commercial exploitation for U.S. companies as part of the full-fledged colonial exploitation of Puerto Rico after 1898.

Along with his self-fashioning as a sensual king, Charles represents the Puerto Rico residents as unworthy stewards of the natural bounty they possess. In the same letter cited above, Charles describes the beautiful landscape and then represents the people of Puerto Rico as “irreligious . . . in an utter stagnation of all healthy impulses from within or without – in no way in keeping with the softness [of the landscape].” Charles thereby suggests a disconnection between the beauty and pliability of the land and its stagnated and irreligious inhabitants. He concludes the January 15 letter to Reverend Ripley by musing on how, “The most lovely spots on our Earth, seem fated to

\textsuperscript{104} Gatell, “New England Eyes,” 286.
be nests of suffering & wrong.”105 His pairing of “seem” and “fated” and of “suffering” and “wrong” is significant because Charles appears to imply that such a destiny for these “lovely spots” need not be so. Just like Edward’s colonial letters, this connection in Charles’ letters between the fate of the Earth’s loveliest spots and what can be done to remedy their suffering hints at and anticipates the attitudes that framed the ideals of Manifest Destiny a few years later.106

One of the wrongs and the suffering that Charles witnessed in Puerto Rico was the institution of colonial slavery, which transformed him into an advocate of abolition once he returned to New England. And while he does reference slavery in his letters, I want to focus on a story he tells in the published excerpt of his journal. In that story, he tells of how he went to visit “an old negro” who sold vegetables from his garden and who lived “on the top of the hill in the corner of his master’s plantation.”107 Charles describes the former slave as “an Emeritus . . . no longer called for work,” and adds that they found his “little peaked hut . . . as lone and romantic a hermitage as ever I fancied. It was such a place and person as [British Romantic poet William] Wordsworth loves to paint.” Old Tita, as the slave is called, elicits in Charles “a strong interest that is almost pathetic” because he is a white-haired, solitary being, “living so independent of everything but the pension great Nature allows him.” As Sophia will do in her descriptions of Cuban slavery that I discuss in Chapter 2, Charles romanticizes the colonial slave experience,


106 For a discussion of the racist overtones of Manifest Destiny, especially at the time when the term was coined by John L. O’Sullivan in the early 1840s, see Reginald Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 219-20.

admiring the old, former slave who, while no longer being directly exploited by his master, has no other sustenance but that which he can obtain by his own wits and effort from the land. The old man’s only companions, Charles notes, are “his dog and kitten, [which] he seems to make much of.” Charles continues saying:

What struck me, standing on the threshold of his cot, was the contrast between his lowly condition and dwelling, and the grandeur of the spot, which some fine instinct led him to choose for his abode, looking down over all the neighboring hills, and over the intervening valleys and fields, to the distant mountains and the blue ocean. It was a prospect which made the gazer involuntarily feel high and stately.108

Deploying the kingly metaphor that he has previously applied to himself, Charles remarks on the contrast between the slave’s situation and “the grandeur of his spot,” which overlooks the land and the ocean. Charles again exemplifies the rhetorical strategies of the anti-conquest when he admits that the gazer – in this case himself – “involuntarily” or innocently feels superior and invested with power. Like Edward before him, Charles demonstrates that colonial visions need not be voluntary or conscious or malicious.

The context of the transitional contact zone of Puerto Rico and the growing imperial presence of the United States in the 1830s made the articulation of these colonial visions in Edward’s and Charles’ colonial letters unavoidable. That is the case even if, like Charles’ feelings atop the hill where the old slave lived, these colonial visions were largely involuntary or to be disavowed. Similar feelings of involuntary excitement expressed in her writings about Cuba would eventually cause Sophia Peabody to disavow them when, after her marriage to Hawthorne, she found her letters and journal to

overflow with a sensuality and sexual excitability that she was no longer comfortable with. But before she felt the need to downplay her Cuba experience, Sophia found the colonial contact zone to be a space where she felt sexually liberated and where she could articulate the sensuality of being a woman without fear of censure or repression. As her rhetorical opposite, her sister Mary used her Cuba experience as a means to advocate firmly against slavery and U.S. colonialism, especially the acquisition of Cuba. As I discuss in Chapter 2, Sophia and Mary shared many rhetorical choices with the Emerson brothers, but the sisters also made their own important and unique contributions to our understanding of the early colonial visions of a rising U.S. empire in the 1830s.
Like the Emerson brothers in Puerto Rico, Sophia Amelia Peabody and Mary Tyler Peabody wrote colonial letters home in the 1830s from Cuba, where they lived for eighteen months. The sisters lived in Cuba at a time when the island was undergoing economic and political changes similar to those occurring in Puerto Rico. Also like the Emersons, the Peabody sisters briefly participated in and benefited from an early colonization of Cuba by the United States: Mary by working as a governess for one of the families with U.S. ties, and Sophia by benefiting from the leisure that allowed her to fully, if temporarily, recover from illness. Unlike the colonial letters by the Emerson brothers, which did not receive much sustained public exposure, the Cuba Journal gave Sophia a certain degree of celebrity status. The nearly eight-hundred-page, three-volume, home-bound text was so widely circulated among the intellectual elite of New England that by the time of her return, Sophia was generally known as its author. Her husband-to-be, Nathaniel Hawthorne, was so impressed with Sophia’s text that he copied more than a dozen entries into his own journal between 1837 and 1841.1 Although Elizabeth prepared

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the letters for publication in the *American Monthly*, Sophia opposed this decision, and they were not published. Still, the *Cuba Journal* continued to be circulated for almost twenty years after Sophia’s return to the States. While Sophia’s Cuba text achieved a quasi-public status, Mary transformed her letters into a novel, *Juanita: A Romance of Real Life in Cuba Fifty Years Ago*, which was published shortly after her death in 1887. Mary first outlined her novel while living in Cuba between 1834 and 1835, and completed a draft in the 1850s, but did not finalize the work for publication until the 1880s. Because of the markedly more public status of the Peabody sisters’ Cuba texts, their works are recognized among the earliest in the body of literature about Cuba that was very popular in the United States during the nineteenth century. The Peabody texts also reveal the significant “cultural-economic connections” that existed between the United States and Cuba by the 1830s. In this chapter, I focus specifically on the rhetorical strategies the Peabody sisters deployed in expressing their different, and even clashing, colonial visions about Cuba.

The 1830s in Cuba were characterized by significant economic changes, mostly ushered in by growing U.S. influence on the island. The increased U.S. presence was accompanied with a concomitant expansion in the production of sugar and coffee, a boost in the illegal importation of African slaves, and a heightening sentiment among the population that Cuba should be free from Spain. Already by the early 1800s, Cuba

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2 See Patricia Dunlavy Valenti, *Sophia Peabody Hawthorne*, 82, 84, 89.

3 Ibid, 83.

depended on the United States for most of its exports and imports, and island planters increasingly turned their eyes northward. They looked to the United States not only for a market for their sugar, but also for technological advances and capital.\textsuperscript{5} In comparison to the smaller island of Puerto Rico, Cuba had a larger, more developed and stronger class of criollos, but it was not the members of this class who initially articulated a separate Cuban nationality. Historians note that the first to express themselves as distinct and separate from Spain in the late eighteenth century were the “free people of colour” in the population.\textsuperscript{6} Still, like Puerto Rico, Cuba did not join in the Latin American revolutions of the 1820s and by the 1830s remained as “ever faithful” to Spain.\textsuperscript{7} Also by this time, large numbers of U.S. Americans had settled in Cuba, working as engineers, machine operators, retailers, shipping agents, freight handlers, and also as sugar planters and slave owners, fueling continued interest in annexation on both the U.S. and Cuba sides.\textsuperscript{8} Last, but not least, that decade boasted the most repressive military governor of Cuba, General Miguel Tacón Rosique, who like Miguel de la Torre in Puerto Rico, had fought and lost in the Latin American revolutions, and prided himself on keeping Cuba “under lock and

\textsuperscript{5} See Clifford L. Staten, \textit{The History of Cuba} (Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 19, 22.


\textsuperscript{7} Staten, 21. See also Gott, 52. Gott argues that most of Cuba’s “economic elite was conservative, fearful of the economic and social consequences of a break with the colonial motherland.” Further, Gott notes that fear of the African-descended population among the white Cuban criollos served to curb separatist ambitions. Gott quotes a Spanish minister in the 1830s stating that: “The fear of the Negroes is worth an army of 100,000 men.”

\textsuperscript{8} Staten, 23; Gott, 54. According to Gott, by 1823, “845 settlers arrived at Cienfuegos, from Philadelphia, Baltimore and New Orleans.”
key. While little of Cuba’s historical context in the 1830s makes it into the colonial poetics of Sophia’s *Cuba Journal*, it drives the rhetorical purpose of Mary’s colonial gothic novel, and provides a tumultuous background for the colonial visions articulated by the Peabody sisters.

Like Edward in Puerto Rico, Sophia in Cuba learned Spanish, and became fluent enough to incorporate its patterns of speech into her letters, including popular refrains. Also like Edward, Sophia paid little, if any, attention to colonial politics and slavery, and like Charles, she focused her imperial gaze on the landscape and the aesthetics of the tropics. Her highly literary colonial letters from Cuba deploy what I call a “colonial poetics,” which were not represented as innocence in the way that Edward and Charles did. Instead, Sophia’s colonial poetics defiantly dismiss the consequences not only of feeling, but also of expressing, colonial desire. In a proto-feminist expression of anti-patriarchal female sensuality, Sophia appropriates the colonial contact zone as a space where she can break with restrictions on female sexual expression, especially those imposed by her more conservative mother and sister. This rebellion is expressed in literary terms through a colonial poetics that celebrates Sophia’s freedom through the sensual and aesthetic appreciation of the contact zone. We can locate Sophia’s colonial poetics within the poetics of imperialism described by Eric Cheyfitz, who argues that

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9 Gott, *Cuba*, 10; Valenti, *Sophia Peabody Hawthorne*, 53. Valenti remarks that Tacón was appointed as Cuba’s military governor in 1834, while the Peabody sisters were living there, and quickly became “the most hated captain general in colonial Cuban history.”

10 Valenti, 52.

11 Angela Miller argues that the artistic representations of the U.S. landscape between 1825 and the 1870s was fraught with political and cultural meaning related to imperial expansion. See Miller, *Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
metaphor and literary language become implicated in, instead of existing outside or beyond, colonial and imperial politics.\textsuperscript{12} The sexually charged and defiant tone of Sophia’s colonial poetics is an act of proto-feminist imagination and artistic creation made possible only by the colonial contact zone. As I mentioned at the end of Chapter 1, once she returned to New England in 1835, Sophia adamantly disavowed her sensual self-representation in Cuba.

In stark opposition to Sophia’s colonial poetics, which celebrated the contact zone through an early feminist, if highly individualistic and depoliticized literary aesthetic, Mary directly addressed colonial politics and slavery in Cuba. She advocated against slavery and U.S. colonialism, specifically the annexation of Cuba, but she did so by articulating and deploying a fear of the racial and national “Other.” To plead her case, Mary recurred to the more public genre of the novel, and developed what I call the colonial gothic, which represented Cuba as a potentially corruptive and dangerous space very much like the horror-ridden castles of the traditional gothic. Also in contrast to her sister, who hailed the colonial space as her personal paradise, Mary represented the contact zone in Cuba as particularly insidious to white women, and to their role as republican educators within the family and the nation. Specifically, I identify interesting parallels between the three women characters in Mary’s novel who die, and how Sophia represented herself, and was represented by Mary, in Cuba. This suggests that Mary was not only addressing slavery and colonialism in her novel, but that she also was working

\textsuperscript{12} See Eric Cheyfitz, \textit{The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 108. Cheyfitz argues that within the colonial context, the poetic possibilities of “metaphor, in those negotiations between the domestic and the foreign, . . . [are] implicated in [colonial and imperial] politics from the beginning.”
out her relationship to her sister, Sophia. Mary’s *Juanita* is the first example of an extra-
continental colonial gothic, in which an overseas contact zone becomes the space where
individual and national anxieties are mediated through a particularly U.S. dimension of
the gothic.

As colonial visions emerging not only within the context of intra-continental
expansion but also within the possibilities of extra-continental colonialism in the United
States, Sophia’s colonial poetics and Mary’s colonial gothic can be situated among the
U.S. women who wrote about their experiences on the frontier. Annette Kolodny does
not include the Peabody sisters in her seminal study of U.S. women writers of the
“American frontiers.” But the colonial visions of the Peabodys add important nuances to
Kolodny’s theorization of how U.S. women writers contributed to the literary claiming of
new territories through their own rhetorical strategies. Principally, Kolodny finds that
U.S. women diverged from their male counterparts’ feminized and sexually conquerable
representation of the colonial landscape. Instead, these women “radically reshap[ed] the
wilderness” into domestic gardens, and appropriated the frontier by recasting this newly
created garden space as home. Kolodny further argues that it was not until the 1830s,
when women came “out of the forests and onto the open and flowering prairies of
Illinois, Wisconsin, and Texas,” that the aesthetic appreciation of “a view” became a
trope in women’s frontier writing.13 “The American Eve had at last found her proper
garden,” Kolodny states, adding that women also “reveal themselves healed, renewed,

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13 This and the preceding quotations are from Kolodny, *The Land before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 6, 8.
revitalized—and even psychically reborn” in such spaces. In what Kolodny calls “sanctioned cultural scripts,” U.S. women writing on the frontier sought to domesticate colonial locations into places where the home and the family could prosper. In important ways, both Sophia’s and Mary’s colonial visions break from the domestic patterns that Kolodny identifies in women’s writings during the peak years of U.S. intra-continental expansionism. Not only does Mary’s colonial gothic take us outside the continental borders of the United States, but in addressing the consequences of interracial (and cross-cultural) relationships, Mary also suggests that extra-continental colonialism will eventually destroy the national family and home. In opposition to the colonial gothic, but in keeping with her contemporary frontierswomen, Sophia envisions Cuba as her personal Garden of Eden and sees it as a space of revivification and renewal. However, Sophia does not fashion this paradise into the domestic garden that her fellow women writers sought. Instead, Sophia’s colonial poetics envision colonialism and slavery as wellsprings of artistic stimulation and creation, and recast the contact zone as a place that enables female agency and control not in domestic terms, but in terms that are highly individualized and sexualized.

14 Kolodny, The Land before Her, 8.

15 Ibid, 12.

16 For an account of Cuba that falls more squarely within Kolodny’s aesthetic representation of the domesticated garden, see Karen Robert, ed., New Year in Cuba: Mary Gardener Lowell’s Travel Diary, 1831-1832 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 23. Robert argues that Mary Lowell followed “English romantic literary conventions by emphasizing the landscape’s picturesque qualities,” and that the value she placed “on domesticated nature—the formal garden as superior to either the ‘untamed’ wilderness or the functional farm—shaped many of the contrasting descriptions in her diary.”
“Queen of the Atlantic”: Sophia Peabody’s *Cuba Journal*

Because Sophia’s *Cuba Journal* is “a text written in colonial Cuba by a North American woman,” Peabody scholar Pamela Lee argues that the text should be read not only as the description of a place she traveled to, but also “within the discourse, or context, of colonialism.” Like Gatell, who classified the Emerson brothers’ representations of Puerto Rico as “ambivalent,” Lee argues that the aesthetics of “visual imperialism” in Sophia’s journal, especially as these representations relate to Cuban slavery, are examples of colonial ambivalence. For Lee, the *Cuba Journal* exemplifies this type of ambivalence because Sophia’s representations cannot “evade the paradoxical nature of her colonial experience.” Unlike Lee, who argues that Sophia’s private reflections offer “a problematic, rather than unilateral, reading of the workings of an imperial subject,” I read Sophia’s colonial poetics as reflecting little, if any, ambivalence and more the desires of an early discursive agent of colonialism. I agree with Lee that we can locate Sophia’s colonial poetics within the “aesthetic sentimentalization,” which she argues “contributed to the visual and discursive appropriation” of the western frontier. Sophia’s colonial poetics clearly represent the extra-continental version of Lee’s notion of imperial sentimentalization. However, what Lee perceives as ambiguity in Sophia’s attitudes toward Cuban slavery, and in her deployment of the imperial gaze, I see as consonant with Sophia’s desire to construct Cuba as her personal paradise, undisturbed by political or moral unpleasantness.¹⁷ In this way, like the Emerson brothers did in

¹⁷All quotations on this page are from Lee, ““Queen of All I Surveyed””: Sophia Peabody Hawthorne’s ‘Cuba Journal’ and the Imperial Gaze,” in *Reinventing the Peabody Sisters*, eds. Monika M. Elbert, Julie E. Hall, and Katharine Rodier (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 163, 173, 175, 176, 177. Lee notes how Sophia’s narrative “reinscribes slavery to accommodate an aesthetic vision of harmony. She erases her
Puerto Rico, Sophia deploys the female version of a passive imperial gaze that possesses the land, at the same time that she engages in the “textual apartheid” that separates the land from its inhabitants.  

Born on September 21, 1809 in Salem, Massachusetts, Sophia was the youngest child of Eliza Palmer and Nathaniel Peabody. Meghan Marshall, the Peabody sisters’ most recent biographer, describes how Sophia “was born with a ‘rebellious spirit’ and soon grew into a ‘very willful, obstinate child.’” Sickly in childhood, Sophia was made worse by the treatments her physician father tried on her, including administering doses of mercury. Sophia eventually developed into a chronic invalid who took her meals in her room because she found “the clatter of knives and forks” an “excruciating torture” eating at table with her family. Her father was forbidden from rocking in his chair “because of the dizziness it caused her.” After a renowned physician declared her to be “without any disease but the habit of being sick,” and recommended a “rest cure in a warm climate,” the family began to consider sending her on a trip to South America or Cuba. 

Highly artistic and gifted in drawing and painting, Sophia also was the most overtly and unconventionally ambitious of the sisters. Early on, she articulated a desire to become president of the United States so she could help the American Indians, to

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18 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 57, 61.

19 All quotations in this paragraph are from Marshall, The Peabody Sisters, 72, 190, 198.
attend college to study chemistry, and to become a minister.  

When she turned sixteen in 1825, Sophia declared herself inspired by “the genius in the young ministry,” Ralph Waldo Emerson. While she may have had the weakest physical constitution of the three sisters, Elizabeth said of her, “I never knew any human creature who had more sovereign power over everybody.” After a particularly debilitating bout of illness that left Sophia weighing only eighty pounds, the rest cure in the Spanish Caribbean materialized when Mary took a job as governess for a prosperous U.S. doctor, who owned several plantations in Cuba and who also accepted paying guests for longer visits.

Once in Cuba, Sophia wrote regularly and in great detail about her experiences, keeping an almost daily journal in letters that she sent to her mother. In her highly literary letters, Sophia focused repeatedly on the natural wonders and colors that she encountered in Cuba, but was basically silent (similar to Edward in his writings) about the issues of slavery and political repression. Clare Badaracco, who transcribed the first volume and parts of the third volume of the *Cuba Journal*, notes how ten of the twenty-seven letters included in the first volume, spanning the period from December 20, 1833 to July 5, 1834, were copied by Mrs. Peabody. The first three letters in the first volume, for instance, are copies made by Mrs. Peabody, and scholars are unsure whether the

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21 Ibid, 214-5, 268. There seems to be some scholarly disagreement as to the nationality of the Morrells. While Marshall describes Dr. Morrell as “a French doctor,” Lee describes the Morrells as “a well-to-do Creole family.” In her most recent work, Badaracco states that the Morrells were “prosperous Americans.” I have chosen to go with Badaracco’s identification since she is the primary researcher on the Peabody sisters’ stay in Cuba. See Lee, “Queen of All I Surveyed,” 164; Badaracco, “Sophia Hawthorne’s Cuba Journal: Volume Three, 31 October 1834 – 15 March 1835,” *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 118 (1982): 280.

copies were made because Sophia’s mother wanted to improve on or censor the originals. There is uncertainty as to whether Mrs. Peabody re-copied the letters from damaged originals, or whether she simply invented the letters to make up for lost missives based on what she believed Sophia would have said.\(^{23}\) While the lack of certainty as to why the copies were made is significant in the historiography of the letters, the fact that they may have been created by Mrs. Peabody does not detract, but rather adds, to their importance as representations of Cuba. Sophia’s mother likely felt able to invent missing representations of Cuba, or to replace those that were problematic to her, because knowledge about that island was already so commonplace among certain circles in New England that she had no fear that her substitutions would ring false. If Sophia’s mother made up the letters based on what she thought her daughter would or should have said, Mrs. Peabody’s participation in deploying and promoting colonial discourses about Cuba would support my argument about the pervasiveness and availability of such colonial visions at that time.

One of the main themes of Sophia’s colonial vision, which celebrates the freedom and agency she feels even before arriving in Cuba, is articulated through casting herself as royalty. Like Charles did in Puerto Rico by representing himself as a king, Sophia’s trip to Cuba allows her to fashion herself as a pampered “queen,” an identity that was impossible for her to adopt in her financially strapped and stress-filled home in Salem.\(^{24}\)

\(^{23}\) Badaracco, “Introduction,” ciii.

\(^{24}\) Valenti, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, 30. Sophia had given indications for this propensity to see herself as a queen, and for unbridled excitement, in her visit to Dedham, Massachusetts, during the summer of 1830, when she announced in a letter that she was “Queen of all I survey when I am riding,” and described riding as providing “an exhilaration I never dreamed of elsewhere.”
The first letter in the first volume, which was copied by Mrs. Peabody, is dated December 20, 1833, and ostensibly written forty miles from Cuban land. As she tells her mother of her adventures aboard the ship, Sophia notes how, “I felt like the queen of the atlantic [sic], perched upon that high place, ploughing [sic] so gracefully and majestically through the deep, deep blue sea.” This self-fashioning as queen is repeated later in that letter when she tells of how “the first mate known by the generic name of Smith, made me a call at the foot of my throne, and told me tales of Sailor superstition.” In her imagination, Sophia is not the queen of a nation but the queen of an entire ocean, the Atlantic, which, in oceanic terms, connects the islands of the Caribbean and the United States. Arguably, as “queen of the atlantic,” Sophia embarks on her own imperial mission to “plough” the deep blue sea for her benefit.

Casting herself as a queen empowered to desire and to claim all she surveys, including the Atlantic Ocean that separates Cuba from the United States, Sophia’s colonial poetics allow her to freely express her wants, especially her sexual desire. This physical desire is as much in evidence aboard the ship as it is later in Cuba, and in that first letter, Sophia tells her mother: “It is very interesting to watch the sailors, especially one, which is a splendid looking creature, with as much grace as strength, fine features and large blue eyes, which he has a way of casting down quite bewitchingly.”25 The erotic objectification and feminization of the male sailor are evident as she describes the nameless man as a “creature,” who despite his evident physical strength femininely casts down his eyes upon being gazed at by her. The liminal space aboard the ship, which acts

25 All quotations on this page are from Peabody, Cuba Journal, 3, 7, 4.
as a transition between the staid New England earth and the vibrant Cuban soil, as well as between the fledgling imperial metropolis and its potential colonial zone, begins to work its seductive power on Sophia. This sexual vibrancy, which Sophia expresses even before she arrived in Cuba, greatly concerned Mrs. Peabody. Aboard ship, Sophia had a “dalliance” with the sisters’ escort, James Burroughs, who may have proposed marriage to her. Later, in Cuba, Burroughs bragged of his connection to “a young lady at La Recompensa” (the large estate owned by the Morrells) at the same time that he read potentially compromising passages from her letters aloud to people at his boarding house.26 Once in Cuba, Sophia developed a too-close-for-comfort friendship with Fernando Zayas, the son of a plantation owner in Cuba who was among the dominant class of *peninsulares*, or Spanish-born settlers.27

Sophia’s biographer, Patricia Dunlavy Valenti, argues that the possibility of a relationship between Sophia and a Cuban, even one of Spanish descent:

> would have been the realization of Mrs. Peabody’s worst fears about the ‘foreigners’ (of whom she would ‘not speak’) and the threats they posed to the ‘lovely daughters of America’ who might ‘yield [their] pure affections to the polluted wretch.’

Mrs. Peabody’s fears, expressing a clear national anxiety that U.S. women would be polluted by the Cuban Other, are echoed by Mary in her novel. Mrs. Peabody continually advised Sophia to subdue herself in Cuba, stating that it frightened her to read such “overstimulation” in her daughter’s letters. Mrs. Peabody’s fears were not assuaged by

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27 Valenti, *Sophia Peabody Hawthorne*, 58.
Mary’s remark to her that Sophia “was a ‘tinder box.’” 28 Sophia’s evident sexual awakening, metaphorically represented by her mother and sisters as over-excitement, suffuses Sophia’s colonial poetics. In this way, Sophia’s colonial poetics departs sharply from the more domestic concerns that her contemporary frontierswomen focused on in their writings, as argued by Kolodny. Sophia’s focus on physical pleasure appears more in keeping with the sexual appropriation of the landscape exemplified by the male frontier writers of her time. This divergence from contemporary gender expectations makes Sophia’s text even more intriguing and significant. 29

**Colonial poetics**

The colonial poetics that Sophia develops in her journal are based on a repertoire of themes, including her self-representation as queen and erotic stimulation. Sophia utilizes these representations to transform the contact zone into a space that sanctions bodily pleasure and the appreciation of the landscape’s aesthetics, regardless of, and perhaps even as a challenge to, any opposing or unpleasant realities. In her Calvinist New England home it would have been morally reprehensible, if not impossible, for Sophia to revel in a pleasure-seeking lifestyle, especially one made possible only because of chattel slavery. In Cuba, however, Sophia was basically free to celebrate this type of life without restriction. Once at *La Recompensa*, Sophia begins to express her delight for a life in which her every desire and need are quickly cared for and attended, especially by

28 Valenti, *Sophia Peabody Hawthorne*, 62-3, 63,

29 Ibid, 148. Valenti argues that Sophia’s *Cuba Journal* “documented in growing detail activities that might have called into question her sexual propriety.”
the slaves. In a January 17, 1834 letter, Sophia describes the profusion of lovely trees, flowers and hedges on the plantation, and when she mentions the outlying buildings she notes “the dwelling of Pierre Luis, a faithful and excellent negro who takes care of the estate – or rather acts as guard.” Sophia does not explain what the slave might be guarding against and, given Sophia’s prior indication that there are “no fences anywhere,” there appears to be no concern by the Morrells about intruders. But Peabody scholars have noted that the Morrells had their slaves heavily policed to prevent insurrections and that the slaves on the plantations were routinely tortured and even murdered. Marshall mentions Mary’s shock upon learning that the manor house was surrounded by broad lawns designed to enable surveillance of the slaves by armed guards. Sophia’s colonial poetics, however, are impervious to this disturbing reality.

Instead, what reveals cruelty and exploitation at the plantation becomes for Sophia a source of entertainment and humor. In the January 17 letter, Sophia mentions:

Tomas, an old negro, [who] takes care of the turkeys – the most quizzical old thing I ever saw. Luisa [Morrell] says he looks as if he had only been basted together - & it is very true.”

30 Badaracco, “Volume Three,” 280. Badaracco states that the “Morrells were prosperous Americans who owned several Cuban plantations. Their children were Louise, Carlito, and Edward. Although sickly himself, Dr. Morrell managed a lucrative medical practice catering to the invalid trade.”

31 Peabody, Cuba Journal, 17.


34 Peabody, Cuba Journal, 18.
Sophia’s remark about Tomas being “old” is echoed later in the letter when she describes another slave, a woman called Tekla, as “ancient,” and while for Sophia these adjectives function as ways to personalize the slaves for her mother, modern readers also glean the fact that the Morrells exploited their slaves even at a very old age. For Sophia, however, the Morrells are “a lovely family – Eduardo [the youngest son] is extremely interesting & makes a delightful little cavalier for me.”³⁵ Direct exposure to Cuban slavery gives Sophia a taste of what life in a colonial plantation is like for the white masters and, unlike her sister, Mary, who openly rejected Cuban slavery and the society it supported, Sophia is seduced by the benefits that life on a Cuban slave plantation provides. In that vein, she continues to fashion herself more definitely in queenly terms, appointing Eduardo, the young, pre-adolescent son of the Morrells, as her personal knight. This type of self-representation signals Sophia’s “detachment from the political turmoil amid which she lived for a year and a half,” and her relatively few mentions of the slave system demonstrate that, contrary to her sister, “the evils of slavery did not dominate her moral horizons.”³⁶ While for Sophia Cuba was a paradise of sensual pleasures, for Mary it was a hell of corruptive influences, as I discuss in the next section of the chapter.

Sophia’s colonial poetics also depended greatly on the leisure that she benefited from while in Cuba. In New England, unless she was prey to one of her repeated periods of physical prostration, Sophia was subject to her older sister Elizabeth’s never ending plans to achieve greater renown and remuneration. Elizabeth always seemed to have one


³⁶ Valenti, *Sophia Peabody Hawthorne*, 53.
plan or another for Sophia to produce some kind of artistic creation as a way to contribute to the family’s finances. In contrast, Sophia’s daily routine in Cuba was quite different from Mary’s, who was responsible for educating the Morrell children, and was often wearied after working all day.\textsuperscript{37} In a letter dated February 3, 1834, Sophia tells her mother about “her day” and describes how she rises “at dawn, & sometimes just before” and:

as soon as possible get dressed enough to go and rouse my Knight Eduardo, who springs at my call with the most laudable eagerness. Then Tekla with enthusiastic devotion & reverence serves me oranges to break my fast, whenever I meet her in my way to Eduardo’s chamber.\textsuperscript{38}

Sophia enjoys the deference that both the Cuban child and slave show her, and she evidently relishes the attention to her physical needs that the slave shows, unbidden, such as providing breakfast as she rushes to awaken Eduardo. In reading Sophia’s colonial letters one understands why she later complained to Elizabeth that Mary “thought me very selfish and self indulgent in Cuba.”\textsuperscript{39} Ard, who edited a 2000 edition of Mary’s novel, argues that while the visit to Cuba turned Mary into a committed abolitionist, “‘it prompted Sophia to decide not even to think about slavery.’”\textsuperscript{40} Each Peabody sister, like the Emerson brothers in Puerto Rico, had a distinct reaction to slavery in the Spanish colonies. Sophia and Edward opted for silence and elision, while Mary and Charles transformed themselves into abolitionists. This split among the siblings also reflects

\textsuperscript{37} Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann’s Juanita,” xviii.


\textsuperscript{39} Ard, xv.

\textsuperscript{40} Idem.
what eventually became the antipodes in the debate over slavery, and over the possible annexation of Cuba to the United States. By highlighting the benefits of Cuban slavery without addressing its immorality or its horrors, Sophia’s colonial poetics discursively naturalized the institution of slavery in ways that made Cuba patently desirable, even for Northerners like herself.

Although Sophia did not address the racial issue directly, the metaphorical opposition between blackness and whiteness is an important theme in her colonial poetics. In a letter dated February 12, 1834, Sophia writes about her visit to a neighboring “estate,” describing in great detail the avenues of “orange and mango trees,” the “extensive lawn, tastefully divided . . . & skirted all round by groves of mango, almond, orange & palm trees.” Sophia’s only acknowledgement in that letter that all this landscaped and harmonious beauty is accomplished thanks to a widespread and repressive system of slavery is her description of:

the dwellings of the negroes set rather back & … so exquisitely nice & white & picturesque that they rather add to the beauty of the scene than otherwise, thatched with palm branches.41

Cuban slavery, long the subject of colonial desire in the United States, became for Sophia an aesthetic part of the Cuban landscape that added to, instead of detracting from, the beauty of her surroundings. The blackness of the slaves, for Sophia, is bounded and framed by the whiteness of the plantation’s structures in ways that made it pleasing, rather than physically threatening or morally reprehensible.

41 Peabody, Cuba Journal, 29.
The centrality of whiteness in Sophia’s colonial poetics is evident in a February 28, 1834 letter, which was copied by Mrs. Peabody, in which Sophia writes that her slave-owning hostess, Mrs. Morrell, remarked how “despite of the sun & detestable red earth,” the effect of the Cuba visit had made Sophia “look whiter than when I came.”

The red earth, whose color revealed its hard, clayish nature as well as its resulting difficulty of cultivation had to be worked on by the black slaves to yield the coffee that enriched the Morrells. The contrasting dark colors of the land and of those who toiled on it served to heighten Sophia’s own sense of whiteness, and of the power of whiteness in a system of colonial slavery. Sophia’s felicity at Mrs. Morrell’s comment on her physical whitening underlines her own metaphorical whitening in opposition to the red color of the Cuban soil and the darkening effects of the sun under which the slaves worked. The visit to Cuba enables Sophia to “look whiter” than when she arrived from her nearly cloistered life in New England, re-inscribing the power of the colonial contact zone to “whiten” the dominant by bestowing unfettered mastery to rule and exploit other human beings for profit.

In the same way that Cuba serves to awaken Sophia’s sensuality and her desire to express such feelings, it also works to restore her health to the point that Sophia describes Cuba as her personal paradise, another theme in her colonial poetics. In this vein, she repeatedly calls the people with whom she associated in Cuba, including the Morrells, her “Paradisiacal People.”

Sophia’s deployment in her letters of the colonial discourse


associating the Americas with Eden, which dates back to Columbus, and which Kolodny identifies with male frontier writers, becomes far more interesting when she appropriates and re-writes the biblical story of The Fall of Man. Although she complains about the inconvenience of the red earth, which “tinges every thing with a red hue and penetrates thro’ thick and thin,” she later begins to appreciate its beauty in making “so rich a contrast with the green” because “I have discovered that the earth of Paradise was red.”

The red-tinted soil, which is initially a nuisance because it gets into and beneath her clothes, becomes desirable only when she associates it with her individual project of recovery. In describing another “lovely ride round the plantation,” Sophia tells how Eduardo:

> plucked a Guava from the tree, arrived at its most delicious state for eating. I ate, and had there been an Adam near, I am afraid that with Eve I should have said, ‘Take thou & eat like wise.’

In this rendition, Sophia transforms the young Eduardo from her personal cavalier into the serpent that tempts Eve in the Garden of Eden before Adam arrives. But Sophia translates the tool of seduction from the proper New England apple into the lush Cuban guava, a native fruit with a hard green skin and a plump pink flesh on the inside. More importantly, while Sophia admits to a momentary hesitation on what she would do if she were recast as Eve in her Cuban Eden, she almost defiantly acknowledges that she “should have” tempted Adam all over again.

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In keeping with the proto-feminist nature of her colonial poetics, Sophia rewrites the fall, embracing all of its overtly sexual connotations, and all its potentially disruptive and corruptive implications. Although Sophia expresses some fear that she would spread this corruption by seducing her imaginary Adam to eat “like wise,” this is not a fear she is willing to reject, or of which she is ashamed. Given her family’s strong objections to her having even a close friendship with a Cuban, it is likely that in Sophia’s imagination she envisioned her Adam to be a U.S. male. Many years later, Sophia referred to Hawthorne, her husband, as her Adam. Again, unlike Kolodny’s frontierswomen, Sophia’s colonial poetics appropriate the paradisiacal garden not as a domestic space where family and nation can prosper. Instead, Sophia deploys the Eden theme to recast herself not as a repentant fallen woman, but as one emboldened by her sexual desire. In Sophia’s rewriting, her American Eve willingly repeats the sin of giving the fruit, not of forbidden knowledge in this case, but of colonial possession, to her American Adam. A common trope in early nineteenth century literature, the idea of an American Adam was used to represent “the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history.”46 Just as she, an American Eve, was offered the guava by a Cuban child, she in turn offers the guava, potentially a stand-in for Cuba itself, to her chosen American Adam. In appropriating Cuba as her personal Paradise and in her willingness to re-enact the Fall, not as the biblical eviction from Eden but as a colonial re-possession of her Cuban Eden, Sophia discursively naturalizes the long-

standing U.S. colonial desire for Cuba. Sophia's colonial poetics connect her Cuban experience in pursuit of personal restoration with what Jefferson a decade or so before had described as a beneficial and “transcendent” project of national “wellbeing.”

While Sophia represents Cuba as her personal paradise in the first volume of the Cuba Journal, the colonial poetics of her letters in the third volume are more focused on her sensual enjoyment of the many social events in which the Morrells engaged. A sense of nostalgia, along with an awareness of the transitory nature of her life in Cuba, begins to tinge her letters as her moment of departure from Cuba draws nearer. Her focus, however, does not waver from her aesthetic appreciation of the tropical landscape, and she sets her Cuban environment as an opposite to her native New England. However, Sophia does not do so in a negative way, like Edward and Charles did in Puerto Rico, and as her sister Mary does in her novel. Instead, Sophia remarks how the beauty of her Cuban environs will become a balm when she is confronted with the gray and cold vistas of New England. In a letter dated November 16, 1834, Sophia writes:

> Whenever I am tired of straight lines & square houses & chimneys [sic] hereafter, I shall shut my eyes to the outward & open them to the inner world where vines will forever hang in circles & curves of eternal beauty (-- in memory’s land) round the realm of Memory.  

For Sophia, the Cuban aesthetic becomes an internalized way to erase her real world through the power of remembrance. The juxtaposition of the straightness, squareness and tallness of her New England life against the cyclical and vine-like nature of her psyche suggests that Sophia’s life in Cuba afforded her a life of artistic affinity that she feared would not be available to her in New England.

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47 Badaracco, “Volume Three,” 290,
Perhaps because her colonial poetics reflect so much of her sensually stimulated inner self, in ways that contrast so sharply with both of her sisters’ social activism, Sophia expressed a deep (if belated) mortification in learning that Elizabeth had circulated her Cuba letters so widely. Sophia states her displeasure by noting:

I do not like at all that my journal should be made such public property of – I think Betty is VERY naughty to send it round in the way she does – just as if it were a published book – It is really a great cross to bear – I feel as if the nation were feeling my pulse.48

Sophia articulates this discomfort at becoming an article of public consumption by suggesting that she does not want national attention paid to her writing. The idea that the nation would be feeling her pulse reveals Sophia’s awareness that, by the end of her stay, she has been writing within a historical context (slavery and annexation) and in a location (Cuba) that made her letters highly noteworthy at the national level. Drawing on this reticence as his evidence, Lazo argues that Sophia takes an “antirepresentational position” because she refuses “to become a purveyor of Cuba for a consuming public.”

As I mentioned earlier, for Lazo, the Cuba Journal is not a Cuba guide “because the island is a backdrop, an excuse for a woman’s quest to define herself while away from her Salem home.” Although it is true that Sophia’s letters “stay clear of inductive conclusions about Cuba’s population based on her individual experiences,” it also is true that Sophia basically ignores Cuba’s population altogether. Further, Cuba is not just a backdrop for Sophia’s “quest to define herself,” but also the catalyst that enables her to exert some sexual agency, and to remain in a stage of almost complete self-absorption.

Contrary to Mary, who fashioned herself as an ethnographic researcher and reporter, Sophia is not interested in Cuba in any other terms than those that fulfill her needs and aesthetic interests. Thus, she basically ignores the Cuban nationality and Cuban politics in her writings, making it seem as if neither one existed. While this may well be “antirepresentational” because Sophia was not particularly interested in representing Cuban society in U.S. terms, I disagree with Lazo’s claim that this shows “a more honest refusal to speak about a topic and for people based on subjective and limited experience.” Lazo simply goes too far in ascribing to Sophia the more contemporary subjectivity of “refusing” to speak upon a subject she was not qualified to speak on. Moreover, “antirepresentation” is arguably just as important a rhetorical tool in colonial terms as representation because the failure to see or recognize a people’s struggle for an independent nationality is another way to naturalize colonial power. This elision is especially important within the context of the U.S. government’s early opposition to Cuba’s attempts to gain independence in the 1820s. Through her colonial poetics, Sophia discursively possesses Cuba and exploits what is pleasurable and serviceable for her, turning the island into her personal utopia. As Pratt argues, this non-violent possession is a discursive imperial act, and, as I argued in Chapter 1, it is as old as the genre of the colonial, or transatlantic, letter itself.

49 This and the preceding two quotations are from Lazo, “Against the Cuba Guide,” 183, 185, 187.

50 See Valenti, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, 53. As mentioned in the introduction to Part 1, Henry Clay, U.S. Secretary of State from 1825-1829, stated: “This country prefers that Cuba and Porto Rico remain dependent on Spain. This government desires no political change of that condition.”
Notwithstanding her colonial poetics, it is evident that by the end of her trip Sophia was uncomfortable with the idea that the popularity of her private journal had almost turned it into a “published book.” Scholars are in disagreement over whether Sophia was sincere in her objections or merely expressing the social convention of female modesty, especially as her moment of return to New England approached.\footnote{Valenti, \textit{Sophia Peabody Hawthorne}, 82-3. Valenti argues that such expressions of discomfiture “may seem disingenuous, paradoxical, or—at the very least—curious,” especially because Sophia, as an artist, sought opportunities to have her paintings and drawings exhibited. Valenti suggests that perhaps Sophia’s reticence was related to her engaging “in a few form of self-expression by creating an artifact altogether different from a painting.”}

Regardless of intention, Sophia is quite emphatic in some of her final letters about how unhappy she is with the level of dissemination that her writing has received. In a letter dated November 29, 1834, Sophia says:

\begin{quote}
If I were stuck up bodily upon a pole & carried about the streets I could not feel more \textit{exposed} than I do at the idea of every body’s reading over my journal to you . . . I shall be ashamed to shew [sic] my face in the places that knew me – for it seems exactly as if I were in print – as if every body had got the key of my private cabinet & without leave of the owner – are appropriating whatever they please—\footnote{Badaracco, “Volume Three,” 292.}
\end{quote}

This passage deploys the images of bodily torture as metaphors for Sophia’s expressed feelings of shame that strangers have rummaged through her “private cabinet.” There also are sexual overtones here that connect the public dissemination of her letters with a sense of physical violation. I find her fears about what her readers might do with her intimate writing intriguingly similar to her own appropriation (without the owner’s leave, so to speak) of the Cuban landscape. In an act of imperial possession, Sophia took what she pleased in her colonial poetics, and she did so without acknowledging that the
Cubans were already trying to become their own owners. The parallel between her bristling sense that her intimate thoughts were being appropriated by others, and the power that the contact zone gave her to appropriate Cuba as her personal Eden, suggests the toll that colonial encounters effect in both material and discursive terms.

Although Sophia’s concerns about the quasi-public nature of her journal seem sincere, her descriptions and the details she provides in the third volume of the journal are much more lyrical and sophisticated than those found in Volume 1. Perhaps Sophia did indeed mind that her first two volumes had been so widely circulated, but perhaps, and paradoxically, that same awareness made her strive for a higher literary standard in her writing. She makes more evident allusions to the classics of British literature and her literary ecstasies over the tropical sunsets in Cuba are highly poetic. In a December 16, 1834 letter, Sophia discusses the “excessive splendor” of Cuban nature and the “enchanted grounds” of the plantation she was visiting:

Returning to the house we mounted to a terrace on the top of a projecting hall – from which we had an extensive view – of the estate & of a sunset that. . . mocks description. It was like the wings of the flamingo, the plumes of the bird of Paradise – The throat of a humming bird -- & ‘the neck of a dove’ all blended together in dulcet harmony.  

In this lovely passage, the colors of the exotic, Caribbean flamingo and the African Bird of Paradise harmoniously blend with those of the more commonly known humming bird and dove. This combination of colors of the Cuba sunset, as rendered by Sophia, calls to mind the clash of cultures in the contact zone, where these exotic birds are originally

found, and the colonizing powers that can turn such birds into captive objects displayed for the enjoyment and consumption of the colonizing culture.

Also in Volume 3, Sophia’s colonial poetics take on an even more defiant attitude against any fetters on her aesthetic and sexual pleasure. Drawing from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Sophia compares the Cuban sunset by quoting arguably the most famous literary representation of Lucifer’s power. In a January 21, 1835 letter, Sophia recounts that she was summoned to watch another sunset, and she compares its “glories unfolding over the western heaven” to:

> the arch fiend’s ‘emperial [sic] ensign’ – ‘mighty standard’ – which Azazel held, that ‘cherub tall’ – shining like a meteor streaming to the wind./With gems & golden luster rich emblazoned,/Seraphic arms & trophies’ – My exlamations brought all forth upon the gallery – What king or angel ever unfurled such a banner as that wit[h] which the Sun is preceded & followed in his triumphal march through the blue fields of space?[^54]

As she does earlier in Volume 1 with her refashioning of The Fall, in which she rewrites the biblical story to articulate and justify her own colonial desire, in this passage Sophia can think of no better metaphor for the Cuban sunset than the colors of Lucifer’s imperial banner. But, unlike Mary, who equates Cuba with hell, Sophia’s tone is one of admiration at the power and abandon of the colors. Sophia is evidently seduced by the sheer sensuality of the tropical sunset, leading her to query whether any “king or angel,” other than Lucifer, can replicate the sun’s triumph over the sky. The fact that she draws on images of kings, empires and military triumphs to articulate her feelings and, specifically, her quoting *Paradise Lost* to bolster her own descriptions, suggests that at

some level Sophia is conscious of the moral costs of her colonial vision. Interestingly, in both her recasting of the Fall and in this passage, where she recalls Lucifer’s attempt against Heaven, Sophia is not siding with those who ostensibly defended goodness and purity. Sophia’s colonial poetics thereby consistently break with her contemporary women writers on the frontier not only because her focus is on individual pleasure, instead of on domestic felicity, but also because she defiantly sides with arguably the most reviled outcasts of Christian religion: Eve and Lucifer.

Another way in which Sophia articulates her highly sexualized colonial desire in her last volume of letters is by analogizing it with a pleasant dream that is contingent on location, not on sleep. After a detailed description of the luxuries and amenities at the nearby plantation where she visits for the island’s social season, Sophia describes how the supper table is spread in an open-air gallery where the:

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gales\text{ from the tea roses }\text{ -- }\text{ & Verbena trees }\text{ -- }\text{ & other aromatic shrubs} \text{ -- }\text{ and the frescos by astral lamp-light -- lull one into a dream that can only be dreamed no where but under the tropics.}^{55}
\]

Again, the sensual pleasure of tropical smells has the power to lull her into a dream only possible in Cuba. This connection between pleasurable dreams and bodily excitation is repeated again in a later description. Once a social event has concluded, Sophia describes how she and a male friend:

\[
fled\text{ into the garden -- into the heavenly moonlight -- }\text{ & ran a gentle race round that low parapet -- Would you realize all your dreams of classic lands & oriental luxury? Come & stand on the parapet within reach of the perfume of the tea rose -- the Verbena & the spicy flowers of a tropical clime -- when the dew melts & diffuses their sweetness -- }\text{ & within sight of those gleaming columns lost in a hanging cloud of waving green -- under a}
\]

\[^{55}\text{Badaracco, “Volume Three,” 303.}\]
January Cuba moon – the brightest of the year – & you will ask no more for the senses. ⁵⁶

That she qualifies her un-ladylike race in the garden with her male escort as “gentle” appears as a half-hearted attempt to appease her strict, Calvinist mother. But posing the question to such a mother of whether she would like to fulfill her dreams of “oriental luxury” seems like downright provocation. ⁵⁷

Even a modern reader can see why Mrs. Peabody expressed so much unease and increasing concern for Sophia. These later letters reflect Sophia’s comfortable acceptance of a life in which “the senses,” as opposed to the intellect or the moral compass, are continually excited and exercised. Sophia goes on to note that “the godlike” is not remembered in Cuba (that is, neither “the heart” nor “the intellect” are “kindled by any burning memories”), but because “it is pure, single Nature, alone in her power & loveliness . . . we think of God himself.” ⁵⁸ This again seems like double-speak, like Sophia trying to refashion her subversive feelings in socially sanctioned terminology. However, this conflation of a male God and a female Nature clearly departs from the Protestant attitude toward nature as corruptive, and is dissimilar from the highly intellectual and individuated Nature that Transcendentalists, such as Ralph Waldo

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⁵⁷ Valenti, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, 36. Valenti argues that early on in her life Sophia developed a pattern with her mother whereby she professed verbal affection but failed to follow her mother’s demands, believes that this behavior was Sophia’s way of resisting her mother’s influence.

Emerson, later articulated. Sophia’s equalization of God and Nature resonates more with the hybrid syncretism of the Caribbean, where the Christian God was reconciled with and refashioned into “pagan” or “heathen” terms.

Ultimately, what resonates most in Sophia’s colonial poetics is the proto-feminist value she placed on being sensually stimulated and socially unfettered. In describing the continual feeling of enjoyment that she received from her surroundings in her January 1835 letter, Sophia says:

We who enjoy it, not in proportion to the revenue of gold it yields to our coffers, but in the infinite proportion of... unappropriating & immaterial pleasure it pours in our hearts with all the holy & immeasurable influences it brings with it – we it is who possess the earth. It was mine that morning – I was the queen of it all.

In this passage, Sophia connects her ability to enjoy her life in Cuba not to material gain but to the pleasure that it gains those who are masters of the earth. However, Sophia is not discussing the possession of a generic “earth,” but of the earth in Cuba because she immediately follows that thought with the statement that during “that morning,” the Cuban earth was all hers, again fashioning herself as “queen of it all.” Her poetics thereby openly articulate her desire for colonial possession.

But while Sophia may have desired the Cuba contact zone because of how it restored and empowered her, some of her late letters in 1834 begin to articulate the realization that it is not life in Cuba that she actually wants. What remains unsaid is that

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59 See Marshall, *The Peabody Sisters*, 278. Marshall argues that if the *Cuba Journal* had been published at the time it was written, Sophia “would have been counted among the earliest practitioners of literary Transcendentalism... in a formulation anticipating both Emerson and Thoreau.”

what Sophia may have desired was the ability to live the life she had in Cuba back in her native land. As she explains in one of her final letters, “My life in Cuba will always be to me like a superb pageant but I never shall regret that it has passed.” For Sophia, “this foreign Paradise” began to seem “as if I had been carried to another planet.” As the moment of departure grew nearer, Sophia began to detach herself from her Sophia-in-Cuba self and began to see the experience as alien and transitory. In Sophia’s words, “…strange and new is all that meets my wandering eyes and I am interested & charmed; but if one should tell me I must stay all the rest of my life me pondría flacca [sic] y desesperada at once, as the Spaniards would say.” Here, Sophia appropriates a Spanish saying, one that refers to growing skinny and desperate with despair, to explain what her reaction would be if she was told that she had to remain in Cuba. Perhaps Sophia was articulating her dawning realization that her evident “overstimulation” in Cuba, both sexual and aesthetic, would take a toll physically and mentally should she have stayed on the island permanently. But I find it significant that she chooses to express how she would feel in Spanish, not English. This suggests a degree of acculturation whereby the Spanish language, rather than her native English, best expresses her feelings. Perhaps Sophia was trying to persuade herself of this potential unhappiness in order to ameliorate the actual despair that she knew that leaving Cuba would cause her.

Her strong regret at leaving is evident in her last letter from Cuba, dated April 24, 1835, in which Sophia says, “Infeliz de mi—! I see with the eyes that are given me. What

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62 Ibid.
would ye else?” In these, the last words she penned in her journal, she again uses Spanish to express herself in a phrase loosely translated as “Woe be me,” and states almost apologetically that what she has seen, and thereby described, has been her own unique perspective. Her final question seems aimed at her critics, and sounds more like an attempt at self-justification by asking those who could criticize her to explain how she could possibly have written about anything else or in any other way when those were “the eyes that are given me.” Valenti argues that Sophia’s sadness was augmented because she knew she was leaving behind the people she had become close to, including the Morrells, the Zayas, and the slaves who had served her. Moreover, Sophia knew that she would miss the contact zone of Cuba itself, with all its beauty and excitement. From the New England perspective, and despite the fact that Sophia was almost cured of her maladies in Cuba, her relatives were deeply troubled by her exuberant response to everything there. They could not help but be struck by the “sensual pleasure” that suffused all her descriptions, not only of the Cuban landscape but also of the “dashing caballero.” Valenti explains it thus:

Both [Cuba and Cuban men] had provided beauty for the eyes and ears, and exquisite morsels for her to taste. Both had provided soothing tactile and physical pleasures. Both had caused Sophia literally to shout for joy and satisfaction.

The suggestion of orgasmic pleasure serves to represent Sophia’s sexual vibrancy and her proto-feminist insistence on freely expressing her feelings through her colonial poetics when writing about her experiences in Cuba.

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63 This and the preceding quotation are from Valenti, *Sophia Peabody Hawthorne*, 64.

64 Ibid, 66.
Sophia’s overtly sensual life in Cuba, which she recanted when she returned to New England in 1835, provided important material for Mary’s anti-colonial novel. In the next section, I argue that Sophia’s transformation in Cuba, which I believe Mary represented in her novel, was one of the reasons why Mary did not publish her novel while living. Upon her return to the States, Sophia insisted “that she had not enjoyed her activities in Cuba,” and repeatedly denied that she had been “selfish” and “self-indulgent,” as Mary had accused her of being. Instead, Sophia claimed that “she had been compelled to participate in activities contrary to her inclinations.” Sophia’s letters after her return from Cuba “suggest [her] attempts to repudiate her experiences in Cuba by contradicting literally hundreds of pages of descriptions in the Cuba Journal.” Like someone awakening from a sexually disturbing dream, Sophia “sought to disassociate herself from the person she presented in the Cuba Journal,” creating a strident dissonance between “Sophia-in-Salem and Sophia-in-Cuba.”\textsuperscript{65} That clash between a New England life and a Cuba life reflected in Sophia’s colonial poetics became a central theme of Mary’s novel, which moved the American gothic into transamerican waters.

\textbf{“On the surface of a volcano”: Mary Peabody Mann’s Juanita and the Colonial Gothic}

Transamerican scholar Anna Brickhouse argues that U.S. intellectuals and writers in the decades before the Civil War “struggled to reconcile the formal structures and racial ideology of literary nationalism with a distinctly transamerican imaginary shaped...”\textsuperscript{65} This and the preceding quotation are from Valenti, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, 85-6.
by cultural fantasies and anxieties about the wider Americas.” Within this tradition of literary transamericanisms, Mary’s novel was the contemporary, in its initial composition if not in its publication, of what Jesse Alemán describes as the “trans-American gothic.” Alemán argues that this dimension of the gothic emerged in the 1830s with Robert Montgomery Bird’s *Calavar, or, The Knight of the Conquest: A Romance of Mexico*, published in 1834. For Alemán, Bird’s romance appropriates the hemispheric space of Mexico and turns it into “a trans-American gothic space haunted by the specters of empire.” Unlike Bird’s imaginative novel, however, Mary’s text was drawn from her own experiences with Cuban politics and slavery. Both the transamerican gothic and Mary’s novel share the moment of early U.S. imperial expansion, which looked toward the Americas as its playing field. But while the transamerican gothic was based on an imaginative appropriation of Mexico, Mary’s colonial gothic emerged from a realistic rendering of slavery, and from the actual possibility of U.S. colonialism in Cuba. This historical basis for Mary’s novel places her text squarely within the tradition of the American gothic.

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66 See Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere*, 27-28. Brickhouse, who examines the thirty-year period between 1826 and 1856 as the period in which the narrative of a national literary history was developed, suggests that examining “the transamerican and multilingual literary practices of these American arenas” enables a reconsideration of nineteenth-century literary history within the practice of what she calls “literary transamericanisms.”

67 See Jesse Alemán, “The Other Country: Mexico, the United States, and the Gothic History of Conquest,” *American Literary History* 18, no. 3 (2006): 408, 410. Alemán argues that Bird’s *Calavar* “marks the cultural moment when Mexico’s antiquity becomes the US’s hemispheric history following its revolutionary break from England.” For Alemán, Bird’s romance “assimilates Mexico’s past and rearticulates it as Anglo-America’s hemispheric story in a literary act that sets the stage for the US’s continental colonization of the Americas.”
In the late eighteenth century, the gothic began as a British formal literary
development that relied on three major structural elements to deploy psychological terror
and physical horror as its main rhetorical weapons. The first structural element of the
traditional gothic is often a foreign setting or place of confinement, such as a castle,
palace, abbey, prison, graveyard, or island. There also is a direct connection between this
claustrophobic location and a disturbing past that haunts the characters. The third
structural element of the gothic is in the nature of such hauntings, which are often
perpetrated by some embodiment of the “return of the repressed” in the shape of a ghost,
specter or monster.68 Born in 1764 with Horace Walpole’s The Castle of Otranto, the
British gothic saw two major periods of resurgence in the 1790s, and later in the 1890s.69
This later explosion of the gothic in Britain has been identified as the “imperial gothic”
by Patrick Brantlinger, who argues that between 1885 and 1916 the gothic folded itself
into foreign adventure stories. For Brantlinger, the imperial gothic served to articulate
national anxieties over Britain’s declining imperial power by combining “the seemingly
scientific, progressive, often Darwinian ideology of imperialism with an antithetical
interest in the occult.”70 Within the specific context of British imperialism in the West
Indies, Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert connects the gothic and colonialism to argue that the
Caribbean became “the premiere site of the colonial and postcolonial Gothic since the

68 For a detailed introduction to the gothic, see Jerrold E. Hogle, ed., “Introduction: The Gothic in Western
69 Ibid, 1.
70 See Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914 (Ithaca: Cornell
University Press, 1988), 227, 230. Brantlinger identifies three principal themes in the imperial gothic:
 anxiety over individual regression “or going native”; “an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism
 or demonism; and the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world.”
early nineteenth century.”

Paravisini-Gebert uses the term “Caribbean Gothic” to categorize slave narratives and abolitionist novels set in the Caribbean, including novels about the British West Indies and Cuba.

The colonial context of the Americas transformed the British gothic as U.S. writers gravitated toward its flexible, multi-generic nature to articulate their individual and collective anxieties about the cultural clashes of the contact zone. These specifically American fears arose within the solitude and violence of the frontier, the troubled legacy of Puritanism, and the racial conflicts resulting from both the institution of slavery and the dispossession of American Indians and Mexicans from their lands.

The interrelationship between the American gothic and history gives this subgenre its uniquely hemispheric dimensions. In describing how U.S. history has been “coded in gothic terms,” Teresa A. Goddu argues that “the American gothic is haunted by race,” specifically arising within “sites of historical haunting” such as slavery. For Goddu, the American gothic reveals how “the nightmares of history” disrupt “the dream world of national myth.”

Specifically within the context of slavery, Kari J. Winter notes that

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72 Ibid, 332. Paravisini-Gebert identifies Mary Prince’s The History of Mary Prince (Barbados, 1831), Juan Francisco Manzano’s Autobiography (Cuba, 1840), and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda’s Sab (Cuba, 1841), among the main exponents to link “the literary production of terror and colonial literature.”

73 Hogle, “Introduction,” 2. Hogle describes the gothic as generically “pliable and malleable,” and as “stemming from an uneasy conflation of genres, styles, and conflicted cultural concerns from the outset.”


U.S. women writers of the gothic crafted heroines charged with unveiling and naming the multiple horrors of their society.\textsuperscript{76} In this way, the American gothic became a genre that both revealed and negotiated the fissures in the national psyche over the enslavement of human beings, along with the intrinsic tensions of gender relations in the new republic.

In line with Paravisini-Gebert’s notion of the Caribbean gothic, Mary’s novel is an abolitionist text set in Cuba. But unlike the texts Paravisini-Gebert considers, Mary’s text is not attempting to conciliate anxieties about a waning empire, whether British or Spanish. What makes Mary’s novel particularly significant and intriguing is that within the proto-imperial context of early U.S. desire for Cuba from the 1830s to the 1880s, Mary’s colonial gothic is concerned with an empire on the rise. Further, Mary’s novel anticipates the worries over U.S. colonialism that arose after 1898, once the United States acquired Cuba during the Spanish-American War. In keeping with early U.S. gothic novels, Mary’s romance appears to be concerned with the “corrupted selves” of her characters in Cuba.\textsuperscript{77} In fact, however, her text articulates and attempts to negotiate an overwhelming national anxiety over the possible corruption of the United States through the twin influences of slavery and colonialism. Because Mary’s novel addresses the possibility of U.S. colonialism from a colonial site, I argue that it should be classified as the first example of the American colonial gothic in its extra-continental expression.


The protagonist of *Juanita,* Helen Wentworth, is the gothic heroine who must unveil the connection between slavery and colonialism in the U.S. imperial context. Thus, Mary’s gothic novel serves to lay bare not only the colonial clash between two disparate cultures but also, more importantly, the national chasm over these issues. Mary’s novel reminds us that slavery was not the only historical ghost haunting the U.S. national “dream world” in the nineteenth century. Because it is born conceptually in a colonial context, and because it directly addresses U.S. colonialism in its intrinsic relationship to slavery, including the African colonization schemes of the nineteenth century, and the annexation of Cuba, Mary’s novel adds a yet-unnamed dimension to the American gothic. The colonial gothic is among those “previously unnoticed or ignored” dimensions of the U.S. gothic that developed between 1830 and the start of the twentieth century. These expressions of the genre include the “provincial gothic,” which Laurence Buell primarily identifies with New England, and which he argues “constitutes America’s most distinctive contribution to the gothic tradition as a whole.”

Undoubtedly, the “self-imprisoning” ambience evident in Hawthorne’s work is an important element of the American gothic. However, I argue not only that the colonial gothic is just as significant an element, but also that Mary’s novel is perhaps the earliest and most relevant exponent of its extra-continental dimension.

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Unlike most novels categorized within the American gothic, such as Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland* (1798), or Hawthorne’s *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), which are set within the national sphere, the gothic elements of Mary’s *Juanita* are directly related to its extra-continental colonial location. Mary’s novel is concerned with U.S. attempts to colonize Africa with freed U.S. slaves, and also with the long-standing desire for Cuba both before and after the U.S. abolition of slavery. Because Mary’s novel both articulates and anticipates U.S. discourses on colonialism, a full understanding of the American gothic is perforce incomplete unless extra-continental imperialism is considered as part of the historical “hauntings” of the United States.

Although most literary critics have failed to acknowledge the violence of extra-

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80 For a full listing of novels considered within the American Gothic since the eighteenth century see Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic*, 37-65. In keeping with the overarching argument of this dissertation, Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* can be categorized as the earliest example of the colonial gothic because its plot negotiates national anxieties about the intra-continental expansion of the United States at the expense of American Indian nations.

81 See Susan Williams, “Revising Romance: Louisa May Alcott, Hawthorne and the Civil War,” *Reclaiming Authorship: Literary Women in America, 1850-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 102. Williams points out that in 1848 President James Polk unsuccessfully “offered Spain more than one hundred million dollars for Cuba.” For several years following that offer, “groups of ‘Filibusters’ made four invasions from the United States attempting to establish a Cuban republic.” In 1854, President Franklin Pierce tried once more to acquire Cuba and President James Buchanan followed his example. Six years later, both Democratic presidential platforms “contained planks in favor of the annexation of Cuba.” The clear expectation was that an annexed Cuba would be a slave state.

82 Ibid, 101, 104. Other contemporaneous nineteenth-century U.S. texts that would fall under my category of the colonial gothic include Louisa May Alcott’s sensationalist newspaper story, “Pauline’s Passion and Punishment,” published in 1862, and her last novel, *Moods* (1888), whose first-edition villainess, Ottila, was a Cuban woman. While Alcott’s Pauline saw publication before Mary’s *Juanita*, Alcott never traveled to or lived in Cuba. Williams argues, however, that the sensationalist and escapist nature of Pauline’s story – in which the heroine marries a “dark” Cuban man to spite her inconstant love interest – served as “a Gothic veil” for commenting on the Civil War. Williams notes how Alcott followed common abolitionist arguments, and deployed the national anxieties about Cuba as a stand-in for the corruptive influences of “Southern indolence and its institution of slavery.” These well-known representations and stereotypes of Cuba, and its connections with southern slavery, enabled Alcott to use the colonial gothic as an indirect way to talk about the Civil War.
continental imperialism as one of the U.S. “nightmares of history” that characterize the American gothic, Mary’s novel clearly exemplifies how these events affected the genre. The American gothic becomes the ideal literary framework through which Mary negotiates the dread raised by the transition from intra-continental to extra-continental imperial expansion precisely because of its intrinsic relationship to the contact zone and to racial and cultural “Others.” The American gothic was aimed at exposing the fissures and “potential evil within the new Republic,” and its constitutive “constellation of grotesque images and symbols and the hyperbolic language of emotional torture and mental anguish” are clearly evident throughout Mary’s novel.83

In the 1830s, when Mary began to conceive of her novel, the U.S. republic was still relatively young, and she turned to the gothic to expose the potential evils threatening a developing national identity. Her cautionary tale is about how a colonized nation, Cuba, might corrupt a more powerful and morally superior nation: the United States. In this way, Juanita is a gothic text that deals not with the “misrepresentations or distortions of national myths,” but with the actual, historical ways in which an ostensibly democratic system was founded on racial and national differences.84 By deploying the gothic to highlight the evils of colonialism, Mary’s Juanita can be examined not only as an allegory, but also as an exposé of how imperialism and colonial desire were “constitutive” elements of the nation-building myths in the United States.

83 Davidson, “Early American Gothic,” 218.

84 See Andy Doolen, Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xxi. Doolen argues that if “we view slavery and the imperial past as constitutive of the foundation of both the United States and its republican principles, then there are no cultural contradictions in the American Gothic to expose.”
This kinship between history and the American gothic is what makes the colonial gothic especially significant. While some scholars locate the American gothic “in a particular historical sensibility,” Mary’s novel actually folds history and autobiography into the gothic. According to her sister Elizabeth, who wrote the short “Explanatory Note” at the end of Juanita, Mary intended to write a preface to sift fiction from fact in her novel, but died before it could be finished. In her note, Elizabeth is adamant in assuring the reader that “every . . . personage named [other than the Morrells, the Cuban family that employed Mary], whether white or black, was real.” This proclaimed realism even applies to the title character, Juanita, whom Elizabeth claims was an actual person even if “her story is idealized.” This assertion of realism is central to Mary’s colonial gothic, and distinguishes her novel from earlier versions of the American gothic, edging it closer to its later expressions, such as slave narratives. Mary’s focus on history over fiction, however, was not just a way to discuss a repressed past of “fifty years ago” that threatened to return during the 1880s, when her novel was published. Mary also was concerned with the revived plans to acquire Cuba in the 1880s, which she felt threatened the future of the United States. Thus, I disagree with scholars who believe Mary’s novel missed its historical time because it was published after the abolition of slavery both in the United States and Cuba. If we consider Mary’s novel to be the first extra-continental exponent of the American colonial gothic, we see that it was published very much within its historical time, when the U.S. government was again considering the colonial

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86 Mann, Juanita, 223.
acquisition of Cuba. Mary’s rhetorical purpose in casting her story as “real life” makes her American colonial gothic story a political warning and a cautionary tale. Deploying her skills as a life-long teacher, Mary advances the notion of an invasive colonial pedagogy, which results from extra-continental imperialism. This dangerous colonial pedagogy is based on the actual lessons that Mary learned in Cuba, and what she wants her readers to fear most is not some ghostly apparition. Mary wants to instill terror over what she perceives as the future, not the past, consequences of U.S. colonialism, and this anxiety becomes the central message of her novel.

For Patricia Ard, who published a new edition of the novel eight years ago, Mary’s novel “evokes the Gothic” by substituting the lonely castle with “the equally isolated plantation house,” and through the constant disruption of peaceful domestic scenes with abrupt and violent scenes of slave torture. Ard also points to the claustrophobic confinement and isolation that Helen experiences in the plantation, and to the repeated instances in which the family, the institution charged with fostering morality at the national level, is “perversely corrupted in Juanita in the service of slavery.” While Ard identifies some of the elements of the gothic present in the novel, I argue that Juanita does much more than simply evoke the gothic. In my reading, Mary purposefully resorts to the colonial gothic to caution against the events, which over the five decades of the novel’s composition continued to conjure the specter of U.S. colonialism in Cuba. In this

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88 Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann's Juanita,” xxvii, xxviii.
way, Mary’s colonial gothic novel moves the American gothic into new and unchartered territory.

**Colonial gothic**

Mary’s American colonial gothic tells how Helen, a Protestant New England orphan educated at a school for girls, travels to Cuba to visit her former classmate and friend, Isabella, a white Cuban woman married to the Marquis Rodríguez, a slave owner. The intimate relationship between the two women allegorizes the increasingly close connections between the United States and Cuba, especially since Isabella received a U.S. education and maintained her ties of friendship with Helen. Upon arriving at the coffee plantation, Helen is exposed to the terror, immorality, and injustice of slavery, including the slave-like servitude of Juanita, a “Moor” and an *emancipada*, or a slave who had been legally granted her freedom. While legally free, Juanita remains unjustly enslaved, and is hopelessly in love with Ludovico, the eldest son of Isabella and the Marquis, who stands to inherit the plantation. But Juanita, whom the text repeatedly identifies as not being racially “black,” knows that her love can never be requited because she is of African descent. In this way, the novel suggests the symbiotic relationship between race and nation in the U.S.-Cuban contexts because, while Juanita’s skin color is not quite white, her African ancestry makes her inherently inferior to actual whites. Ludovico, meanwhile, falls in love with and marries another U.S.-educated, white Cuban belle, Carolina, who soon after her return to Cuba begins to exhibit overly sensual and frivolous behavior. Carolina eventually dies, and when Ludovico realizes that he loves...
Juanita, he proposes marriage. This offer, however, is made only after Ludovico’s mother, Isabella, dies of an unspecified wasting disease, and Helen takes all of the Rodriguez’s children from Cuba to the United States.

Isabella’s death seems directly related to her inability to satisfactorily change her passive attitude toward slavery at Helen’s insistence. After Isabella’s death, Juanita pledges her eternal servitude to Ludovico, but refuses to marry him. Juanita claims that she would “be a dark cloud upon his life,” something Helen does not disagree with. When Ludovico and Juanita return to Cuba, she is kidnapped by slave catchers, and taken to a building where other imprisoned slaves and former slaves are held. There, Juanita dies quite anti-climactically in a fire set by an angry mob that suspects the slaves of conspiring to revolt. The novel continues for a few more pages, describing Ludovico’s attempts to become a “good” slave master in Cuba, and ends with the narrator’s appeal to the reader to have faith “that God teaches man by his failures as well as by success and happiness.” The novel suggests that the inability of U.S. influence to change Cuban society for the better should serve as a caution against colonial incursion into that island. Mary wants to persuade her readers that the failure to Americanize Cuba is a lesson sent from God that the United States should leave well enough alone.

In keeping with the genre, Mary’s colonial gothic depends on the shock value of juxtaposing scenes of domestic peace with scenes of physical and psychological horror and trauma. Household scenes, and scenes that evoke aesthetic pleasure in the tropical beauty of Cuba, are repeatedly contrasted with graphic moments of torture and suffering.

89 All quotations herein from Mann, Juanita, 211, 216, 222.
Early on in *Juanita*, Helen gratefully sinks “into a slumber such as can be enjoyed only in that atmosphere, which seems created for sleep, so soothingly does it bathe the limbs and faculties in repose.” As her last thought before falling asleep, Helen has “the comforting reflection that here she should be spared the pain of witnessing any distressing features of the institution to which she had had such an appalling introduction [upon her arrival to Havana].” Trusting that no cruelty toward the slaves will be evident in her friend’s plantation, Helen dozes off, relieved that she will not endure the common scenes of slave degradation that she witnessed upon arriving to Cuba. The narrator continues:

But her little bark of sleep seemed to her scarcely launched on the sea of night before she was roused from her refreshing slumber by the most piercing and heartrending shrieks, from many voices, accompanied by the terrific sound of the lash.

From its first pages, the novel thereby establishes an opposition between the dreamy Cuban atmosphere and its gothic reality, in which the peace is shattered by the screams of tortured human beings. Helen rushes outside to find that “the old negro” who had been her “kind and attentive escort” is being cruelly whipped by the overseer. The narrator describes how:

> His blood was pouring from the wounds inflicted by the lash. The groans of the victim, the shrieks of his wife and children, were maddening to her ear. The friend of her youth, [Isabella] whom she knew to be the milk of human kindness, stood motionless, though pale and weeping.  

This graphic scene, which recalls the gothic descriptions of lashings in slave narratives, such as those by Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass, functions as our introduction to life in the Rodriguez plantation, complete with splattering blood and the screams of the

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90 This and the preceding quotation are from Mann, *Juanita*, 33.
victim. This is also our introduction to the main opposition in the novel between Helen’s anti-slavery activism and the inaction of Isabella, whose paralysis when faced with such cruelty contradicts the narrator’s description of her as “the milk of human kindness.”

When Helen impulsively tries to intervene to stop the torture, Isabella prevents her and points out that any attempt on the slaves’ behalf “will only make the matter worse for somebody” because the slave master (Isabella’s husband!), and the overseer “will not be interfered with.” Helen immediately decides to leave the island but, almost as quickly, convinces herself that she can make a difference by staying in Cuba. She determines to become an observer and informant for the abolitionist cause in the States, which she admits to having previously criticized. The narrator explains how: “A new aspect of human duty presented itself to [Helen]. She determined to hush every selfish feeling, and look with a keen eye – a calm one, if possible – in this monster of iniquity.”

In keeping with her role as gothic heroine, Helen’s self-appointed duty is to stare down the monster of slavery, but this resolve is not easy to maintain in the colonial plantation. After her first exposure to the lashing of a human being, and after finding out that the overseer’s rage was vented on other slaves as well, Helen takes a walk to cool her temper. On that walk, she inadvertently stumbles upon the place where the tortured slaves are being cared for by other slaves. Upon entering the shack with the intention of offering her help, Helen sees their broken bodies and, in classic gothic fashion, felt that her “knees trembled under her, and her senses reeled again with horror.” Here again, Helen nearly faints once she realizes that staring down the monster of slavery is easier said than done.

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91 All quotations in this page are from Mann, Juanita, 33, 36.
Even a modern reader of Juanita might be struck by the graphic violence described by Helen, which is aimed at bolstering the persuasive powers of Mary’s colonial gothic. After her initial encounters with slave torture at the plantation, Helen goes riding on horseback with Isabella, and upon turning a corner witnesses what she describes as “a scene characteristic of slave institutions, even under the mildest regulation.” The grotesquely gothic image that “bursts upon her” is detailed as follows:

A group of colored men and women were standing under a tree, to which was chained an infuriated blood-hound, from whose sides blood streamed upon the ground. Two negroes, also attached to a post, at a little distance from the dog, by long ropes, stood bleeding and apparently exhausted; one held a whip, which was stained with the animal’s blood. . .

The scene is described with little context or explanation so that readers find themselves in the same situation as Helen, unfamiliar and shocked observers who must figure out what is occurring before they can understand the scene. Soon enough, Helen realizes that the slaves are torturing the dogs so that the dogs learn to attack only blacks, not white people. The purpose of this training is so that the overseer can boast “that the white man is never bitten in my plantation.” Upon this gruesome realization, Helen finally faints, falling “heavily upon Isabella’s arm, and slid[ing] to the ground in happy unconsciousness.”

Although Helen has come close to fainting a few times, this is the one moment in the novel when she actually loses consciousness. While fainting is a trope in gothic fiction that usually signals that the heroine must evade a threat to her sexual purity, in Helen’s case it is not a sexual assault that leads her to faint. Instead, the threat is ultimately to her self-conception as a U.S. American, one whose antislavery and anti-colonial convictions

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92 All quotations in this page are from Mann, Juanita, 37, 39, 73, 74.
lead her to physically reject the gothic scene. The fact that she faints on Isabella also is significant, because it contrasts Helen’s U.S. sensibilities with the corrupted attitude of the white Cuban slave mistress.

Helen soon discovers that the corruptive power of colonial slavery.spares no one, masters, slaves or dogs, and not even the landscape. Repeated exposure to gothic scenes of inhumane cruelty and exploitation, which repeatedly cause Helen’s senses to reel, eventually affect her appreciation for the Cuban scenery. Although she initially admires the tropical beauty of the Cuban landscape and is encouraged by Isabella to focus on those aesthetics rather than on the slaves, Helen soon alters her impression. All of nature at the plantation becomes part of its gothic character because, for Helen, the land and the climate become associated with the culture of slavery. In drawing comparisons between Helen’s past bleak New England landscapes and her present colorful Cuban ones, the narrator explains how:

Vegetation clothed the earth there as here, but here its rank luxuriance, where untamed, typified the unbridled sweep of human propensities, while the curbs and restraints that a certain measure of civilization imposed upon it only concealed the fens and marshes that were the product of a decay as pestiferous to the physical as the corruptions of the heaven-born passions are to the moral atmosphere.\(^93\)

Like the gothic specter that will not be repressed, the vegetation in Cuba is only superficially tamed, and this veneer of civilization only serves to occlude the “pestiferous” corruption at its core. In this description, Mary deploys the ages-old discourse that equated the colonial land and climate with the colonized Other, and Helen

\(^{93}\) Mann, *Juanita*, 49.
thus associates the landscape with the gothic, turning its menace into something that cannot be saved because it is innately and irredeemably corrupt.

Unlike her sister, Sophia, who (like Isabella) preferred to focus on the aesthetics of the view rather than on the violence of slavery, Helen’s appreciation for the Cuban landscape is transformed into a barely concealed horror once she discovers the immorality at its core. The narrator describes how:

The mysterious shadows of the cocoas, which the day before looked like the guardians of hidden coolness . . . now cast a melancholy veil over the earth they shaded, and the stiff leaves whispered sad secrets of wrong done and unredeemed. The Gothic arches of the bamboo alleys were in consonance with her feelings…

Cuban nature is transformed, in Helen’s mind, into gothic architecture, with arches, alleys, and shadows. Exposure to the gothic terrors of Cuban slavery ruins the landscape for Helen so that the “Cuban skies, palm-trees, bamboo, and all tropical glories, were inevitably associated henceforth in Helen’s mind with the unutterable woes of humanity.”

Contrary to Sophia’s *Cuba Journal*, which mostly elides the plight of the slaves, developing a colonial poetics from the pleasure of passively possessing the exotic Cuban landscape, Mary’s novel proposes that the colonial gothic infects and overpowers all aesthetic appreciation and desire.

Also unlike Sophia’s *Cuba Journal*, which openly celebrates her stay in the colonial contact zone as a source of proto-feminist empowerment, Mary’s colonial gothic represents colonialism and slavery as destructive, subterranean forces with the power to

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94 Mann, *Juanita*, 68.
eradicate everything in their path once they erupt. Deploying the classic gothic metaphor of the volcano to represent the dangers of slavery, the narrator says:

It is astonishing how long people can live on the surface of a volcano without realizing its dangers. We turn away from the contemplation of the evils that are inevitable, and, when we veil them from our sight, they are to a certain extent nonexistent to us.\(^{95}\)

Just as the imperial gaze turns away from and overlooks the fact that the volcano’s underground fire is a source of certain destruction, Helen’s concern is that it will ignore evident evils precisely because of the sensual beauty of the colonial scenery.\(^{96}\) In keeping with the metaphor of living on a volcano, \textit{Juanita} is a story about how the failure to recognize the evils of slavery results in death and destruction for one Cuban family, and for the young \textit{emancipada}, Juanita, whose fate is intertwined with theirs. When Isabella, the mother of the novel’s hero, Ludovico, tells Helen confidently that neither Juanita nor her son will contemplate marriage because “their positions in society forbid” this possibility, Helen is unconvinced. “I cannot share your confidence,” she tells her friend. “You sleep on a volcano. May it never burst forth into flame!”\(^ {97}\) This potential conflagration, Helen suggests, is related to the fact that the volcano of slavery enables interracial relationships. Though Isabella is right that Juanita will reject Ludovico’s plan to marry her, by the end of the novel slavery is clearly not the only issue metaphorically

\(^{95}\) Mann, \textit{Juanita}, 74, 52.


\(^{97}\) Mann, \textit{Juanita}, 176.
represented as living on the surface of a volcano. In the same way that the novel applies that metaphor to the slave-owning society in Cuba (and by implied extension to U.S. society as well), I argue that the volcano metaphor in *Juanita* is equally applicable to the novel’s concerns about U.S. colonial desire for Cuba (especially as it naturalizes interracial and cross-cultural relationships). In the same way that the volcano of slavery threatens to destroy Cuban and U.S. society, failure to realize the dangers of colonialism implies the same potentially nefarious danger. But the metaphor of the volcano also works in its positive or enlightening way in *Juanita* because the novel seeks to issue a timely caution that could prevent the volcano’s explosion.

**Colonial pedagogy**

In deploying the colonial gothic as a cautionary tale within the context of nineteenth-century U.S. geopolitical and imperialist interests, *Juanita* both anticipates and exemplifies what Amy Kaplan describes as the discourse of “Manifest Domesticity.” Kaplan categorizes a number of women-centered and women-authored texts written in and after 1847 as examples of “imperial domesticity.” She argues that the nineteenth-century “cult of domesticity” was inseparable from the discourse of Manifest Destiny. For Kaplan, “the ‘empire of the mother’ developed as a central tenet of middle-class culture between the 1830s and 1850s, at a time when the United States was violently and massively expanding its national domain across the continent.” Concomitantly, the “cult of domesticity” connected the home and the nation by assigning

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98 See Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*. 

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women to the domestic sphere where they were to exert the “sentimental power of moral influence” upon the new generations of the Republic. Conceived in the 1830s, but published well after this expansionist discourse had become a cultural commonplace, *Juanita* anticipates, exemplifies and challenges the fledgling ideals of Manifest Domesticity.

By initially trying to exert moral influence upon the domestic sphere occupied by Isabella and her children, Helen neatly fits Kaplan’s notion that Manifest Domesticity was “related to a process of domestication, related to the civilizing process of empire.” Further, by assuming the role of rescuer of the Rodriguez’s children, and by eventually removing them all from Cuba to the United States, Helen takes on “the dead Isabella’s role as mother.” This action fulfills the nineteenth-century expectation that white, middle-class, republican motherhood should be “the ethical and structural model for all of American life.” *Juanita* further demonstrates how the ideals of Manifest Domesticity were not only evident within the intra-continental sphere but in extra-continental spaces as well. *Juanita* clearly perceives and articulates Helen’s role in Cuba as one of civilizer, and her eventual decision to return to the United States signals her conviction that the corruption of colonial slavery is too dangerous for her to combat single handedly. But Helen’s decision to leave Cuba also points to the limitations of the “empire of the mother” because the protagonist realizes that influencing Isabella and the children is simply not enough to civilize what she perceives as the incurable barbarism of

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99 This and the preceding two quotations are from Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 24-6. Kaplan underlines how, within that two-decade period, the United States expanded its national territory by seventy percent through violent expansionist policies, including Indian Removal and the War with Mexico.

100 Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann’s *Juanita,*” xxix.
Cuba. Despite her manifest righteousness, and in a way that challenges the across-the-board applicability of Manifest Domesticity, Helen realizes that living in Cuba is too much like sleeping on top of a volcano: the danger of annihilation will never be eliminated.

Because the main rhetorical purpose of Mary’s colonial gothic is to tell a preventative tale, the story is structured as a pedagogical lesson about the consequences of slavery and colonialism. Similar to the preface that she wrote for her 1868 translation of Facundo Sarmiento’s book about Argentina, in Juanita Mary sets up the United States, and, specifically, New England, as the standard of morality and civilization, and Cuba as its complete and “barbaric” opposite. 101 In describing Helen, the narrator says that before arriving in Cuba her “home had been in the freest nation of the earth, and in the most advanced portion of that nation.” 102 The narrator represents the United States as the

101 Before Juanita was published, casting Cuba in the role of the barbaric and the United States as the paragon of civilization, Mary embarked on the transamerican project of translating Facundo, o civilización y barbarie (1845) by Argentinian ambassador and president-to-be Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. For details on the translations of Sarmiento’s text see Diana S. Goodrich, “From Barbarism to Civilization: Travels of a Latin American Text,” American Literary History 4, no. 3 (1992): 443-463. Goodrich explains that Sarmiento met the Manns in 1847 and in 1865, shortly after his arrival in the United States as Argentinian ambassador, he asked Mary to translate his text into English. She agreed and over the forty-year expanse of their friendship, promoted by a common interest in education, and up to the year of her death in 1887, Mary and Sarmiento exchanged nearly four hundred letters. Goodrich argues that in translating Sarmiento’s seminal Latin American text, which advocated for the “civilization,” in European and U.S. terms, of the fledgling South American republics, Mary made a series of substantive changes. One of the most significant was the focus of her translation on the binary opposition between civilization and barbarism. Mary also legitimized Sarmiento’s text by deploying the discourse of Manifest Destiny, or of the inevitable and beneficial influence of U.S. culture as a “prototype” for the rest of the hemisphere. Translating Sarmiento’s Facundo into English gave Mary her first taste of how to craft an epistemological focus so that a text, which already advocated a U.S.-style “civilization,” could also work as a didactic example of Manifest Destiny by setting the South American character as essentially “barbarous” but civilizable through U.S. influence. This experience in transamerican translation gave Mary the discursive tools that she deploys again in Juanita but in that case to argue that Cuba was an inherently “barbaric” country, which could not be civilized by the United States.

102 Mann, Juanita, 14.
“freest nation,” eliding the fact that slavery existed there just as it did in Cuba, especially in the 1830s when the novel’s plot develops. As Edward and Charles did in Puerto Rico, Mary establishes New England as hierarchically superior to all other regions in the United States, thereby subsuming the U.S. national identity to that of New England’s. This regionalization of U.S. identity is another characteristic of the American gothic, which Goddu argues is “most recognizable as a regional form” that sets the U.S. South “as the nation’s ‘other.’”¹⁰³ In that fashion, the novel’s narrator tells how Helen is a “Massachusetts girl,” the daughter of an educator who instilled in her “the trials, sacrifices, and conquests of the early Pilgrim history, which . . . made New England what it is.”¹⁰⁴ The book portrays Helen not only as a born teacher (like Mary herself), but also as personifying the Protestant ethic and national myth upon which the U.S. nation was founded. Significantly, Helen’s upbringing also includes knowledge about the “conquests” of the Pilgrim’s history, which indirectly references the wars against the Indian nations who were dispossessed of their lands by the colonists. Because of this background, Helen is particularly well suited for her role under Manifest Domesticity as an educator whose pedagogical skills are to be deployed in an extra-continental arena.

In assigning herself the role of researcher and informant in a threatening gothic context, Helen not only learns to appreciate her own nation more, but she also projects her moral expectations onto Isabella and the Rodriguez children. This manifestly domestic determination, in turn, impels Isabella’s death, and the children’s resulting

¹⁰³ Goddu, *Gothic America*, 3.
escape with Helen to New England. Once Helen decides to stare at “the monster of iniquity,” she also hopes “with trembling that she might help them [actually, just Isabella] to see their farther duty [as masters].” In achieving her purpose of enlightening Isabella about her duty, Helen continually relies on the opposition between life in New England and life in Cuba, a binary that frames Helen’s experience in the colonial context. Not surprisingly, given that this opposition was supported by well-established colonial discourses, New England for Helen represents civilization, beauty and reason, while Cuba is barbaric, seductive and corrupt. Isabella, educated as a Protestant in New England, tries to prevent the corruption of Cuban society from contaminating her children by securing, through Helen, a U.S. nursery maid. As the narrator explains, Isabella’s children:

had not been trained, as most of the children of slave-countries are, by negro nurses, but [with the help of a U.S. nursemaid] their mother had trained them herself . . . for Isabella had brought with her, from her old New England life, impressions and principles regarding the education of children that her Cuban life had never corrupted.

The narrator suggests that while other aspects of Isabella’s principles may have been perverted by her Cuban life, her pedagogical ideals remain fiercely U.S. American. This determination includes Isabella’s desire to have her children educated solely in English and by a white U.S. woman, not a black Cuban slave.105 In fact, the intrinsically corruptive nature of slavery, and of slaves as educators, is articulated when the narrator tells us that Camilla, a slave character whom I more fully discuss later in this section, is never “allowed to invade the nursery.” The black Cuban slave is thus banned from the

105 All quotations on this page are from Mann, Juanita, 37, 40-1, 50.
site of U.S. education within the white Cuban residence because the slave’s brand of pedagogy would “invade” or usurp that space. In an interesting rhetorical “turning of the tables,” the book represents the slave, the actual abject victim of colonialism, as the promoter of a particular brand of invasively dangerous colonial pedagogy, while U.S. culture is portrayed as the desired pedagogical standard.

*Juanita* articulates its pedagogical lesson by deploying the colonial gothic to articulate the symbiotic relationship between slavery and colonialism in both the U.S. and Cuban contexts. We are told that Helen arrives in Cuba “with the northern feeling upon the subject of slavery,” which at the time was “rather a negative feeling.” Helen’s visit, the narrator says, occurs “before the agitation of the question of human rights had stirred the foundations of society,” a rather oblique reference to the Civil War. At the time when Helen visits Isabella, the “controversy between abolitionists and colonizationists had just begun,” and William Lloyd Garrison had only just “boldly attacked the monster crime.” This chronological fact dates the moment of Helen’s visit to Isabella in the early 1830s, coinciding with Mary’s own stay in Cuba. Colonization, the narrator adds, “had excited some interest in the benevolent, but the general voice condemned any suggestion of immediate measures of emancipation.” The colonization scheme, however, reached its heyday in the 1850s, when Kaplan argues that U.S. colonization of Africa:

> had a two-pronged ideology: to expel blacks to a separate national sphere, and to expand U.S. power through the civilizing process; black Christian settlers would become both outcasts from and agents for the American empire.\(^\text{106}\)

\(^{106}\) All quotations on this page from Mann, *Juanita*, 51, 8, 9, 36.
The issue of U.S. colonization in Africa is directly referred to again later in the novel, when Helen is already at La Consolación, the coffee plantation owned by Isabella’s husband. The narrator describes how Helen:

had wondered at the opposition of decided anti-slavery men to the scheme of [African] colonization; but she understood it now. She now saw why the slave-holders favored it— . . . because it would be so convenient to have all the freemen of that race removed from the vicinity of slavery, whose peaceful existence their freedom threatened.  

Living in Cuba teaches Helen that slavery and colonialism are intrinsically related, further revealing to her that U.S. colonialism is “founded on self-interest” on the part of the slave owners. This is the first instance in the novel in which Helen learns something about U.S. colonialism through her experience in Cuba. Like the Africa colonization scheme, U.S. colonial desire for Cuba was mostly fueled by its potential as a slave economy.

By situating Helen in Cuba in the early 1830s, but by discussing the issue of African colonization as an ongoing event, Juanita reveals some of its formal disjunctions. Mary’s text suffers from major internal disunities, which show that it was written at different times, spanning the five decades between the 1830s and the 1880s. The narrator, who focuses on the experiences of the protagonist, sometimes speaks as if

107 Mann, Juanita, 26.

108 Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann’s Juanita,” xvi. Ard notes that the dates when Mary began and completed Juanita remain uncertain. What is known is that Mary likely began the novel when she returned from the Cuba in the 1830s but decided against publishing it “so as not to embarrass her former hosts.” We also know, mostly through her sister Elizabeth, that Mary died before completing an explanatory preface that she wanted to write for the book. The title, Ard argues, further suggests that Mary substantially revised the novel before her death. Ard also states that in a letter circa 1860, Mary says that she “must write [the book] sometime.” Prior to that, in 1858, Mary’s son George published excerpts from the novel in a magazine. According to Ard, “It seems probable [Mary] had written substantial portions of the book by 1858 but did not finish it until shortly before her death.”
slavery existed in the United States, as it did until 1865, but at other times, the narrator speaks as if slavery no longer existed.\textsuperscript{109}

In being exposed to the relationship between slavery and colonialism, Helen undergoes an evident change in her personal attitudes. The narrator describes how Helen finds herself “rudely waked” after only a “few days’ residence in a slave-country . . . from her comparative insensibility to the fact of slavery.” This description implies that Helen was not as insensible as pro-slavery advocates, nor as insensible as her Cuban friend, Isabella, turns out to be. In Cuba, Helen witnesses “the degradation and helplessness of a class of men and women whom she had hitherto looked upon practically as almost fabulous.”\textsuperscript{110} Similar to Charles, who experienced slavery first-hand when he lived in Puerto Rico, facing slavery in this “slave-country” serves as a pedagogical shock for Helen (as it was for Mary) because it transformed slavery from theory to practice.

While other authors, such as Louisa May Alcott, used Cuba as a metaphor for the U.S. South, Mary actually situates Helen in Cuba, further transforming what her mostly northern readers would understand as a facsimile for a southern slave state into its own colonial threat.\textsuperscript{111} Notwithstanding, Juanita’s narrator describes Cuba, but not the United States, as a slave nation. This is so even though, for at least thirty of the fifty years that it took Mary to finalize her novel, the conditions for slaves in the U.S. South (and even the

\textsuperscript{109} Jaksić, “Mary Peabody Mann,” 110. Jaksić argues that there is “a certain anachronism” in the novel because of its temporal disagreements.

\textsuperscript{110} Mann, Juanita, 9.

\textsuperscript{111} Williams, “Revising Romance,” 104. Williams argues that Alcott deployed the Cuba plot in “Pauline’s Passion” to suggest “that Southern indolence and its institution of slavery can infect the national body as a whole, stripping women of the discipline that makes them suitable mothers, writers, nurses, and healers of the nation.”
North) were not much better, and arguably worse, than in Cuba. This rhetorical move to downplay the United States as a “slave country” is what allows the pedagogical opposition between the United States and Cuba that frames the text to work. With a few marked exceptions, Mary minimizes the issue of slavery in the United States, focusing her attention and her gothic story on Cuban slavery. In this way, she can better set up Cuba not only as a stand-in for the South, but also as a dangerous racial, cultural and national Other. This extra-continental danger, however, becomes even more potentially pernicious because Mary knows there are elements within the national self that want to possess its Otherness. The same potentially explosive volcano awaited not only across the Atlantic Ocean, but also within the domestic space.

Helen’s gothic experiences with Cuban slavery produce pedagogical epiphanies not only about the condition of the slaves, but also about slavery in the United States in comparison to Cuba. In the narrator’s words:

[Helen] now felt as if oppression and slavery had been mere words to her. Within a few hours, the deepest crimes against man had been brought forcibly to her notice . . . Could she stay where all distinction between good and evil seemed to be so obliterated? At first she thought not.112

But then Helen has a “second thought,” one that tells her that she “has no right to lose this opportunity of observation, for was there not the same plague-spot festering in the heart of her own country?” As I mentioned before, Helen’s self-appointed duty of becoming an observer and an informant for the cause of abolitionism persuades her to remain so that she can combat what in her country is a mere “plague-spot” in the national heart. In this passage, the opposition is clearly between her magnification of the crime of

112 Mann, Juanita, 14.
slavery in Cuba, and her diminution of the same offense in the United States. While the suggestion is that the spot will spread, like a disease, it is still manageable and eradicable. Helen’s decision to stay on the island as an observer and reporter, despite her misgivings, underline the novel’s pedagogical purpose: “Should not these things be known? Perhaps I may be a humble instrument for enlightening society upon this fearful topic.” Indeed, Helen continually represents herself as an “observer” not only of the dynamics within the Rodríguez family, but also of “the people,” as the slaves are referred to by their masters. The society that Helen seeks to enlighten is not that of Cuba, but that of the United States, where the cause of abolition had only just begun to be widely debated in the 1830s.

Helen’s pedagogical purpose, within the context of Manifest Domesticity, takes on a missionary zeal in her attempts to persuade Isabella that she must remain true to her U.S. education, and renounce the influence of her Cuba life as a slave owner. There is an evident crescendo in the tension between Isabella’s “old New England life,” the education she has received by her reinsertion into Cuban life, and the role Helen plays in constantly admonishing her friend by reminding her of her U.S. upbringing. This conflict is in evidence when the narrator explains how:

When Isabella first returned to Cuba, she was plunged into scenes and modes of life which she had wholly forgotten . . . If it had not been for her constant intercourse with Helen, her American life might have become to her as a dream."113

113 All quotations on this page from Mann, Juanita, 36, 133, 181, 50.
The re-education that Isabella receives upon returning to Cuba includes having “soon learned not to inquire too curiously” about how the slaves are treated. This learning to ignore the plight of the slaves is one that Isabella defends when challenged by Helen’s growing indignation after her friend blames her impotence on her gender. Isabella tells Helen that she felt just like her “when I first came home, but I have resigned myself to necessity. What else can women do? All I can do is be as good a mistress as I know how.” Isabella uses the patriarchal system that upholds both slavery and colonialism as her excuse for failing to be an agent of change, despite her U.S. education. When Helen later criticizes Isabella not only for living under the system of slavery, but also for “bequeathing” it to her children, Isabella cries: “Oh, be just, Helen! Am I not powerless? But I am wholly unnerved as well as you.”\footnote{114} A return to the patriarchal Cuban society has rendered Isabella powerless to uphold the values she learned in her New England life. For Helen, this is greatly problematic not only for Isabella, but more crucially for her children. Ard argues that Isabella’s protracted decline, which begins shortly after her clashes with Helen, is directly related to this female powerlessness. Her punishment for falling into that role is death, and as Isabella comes to reject slavery, she articulates the metaphorical connection between slaves and white women under the patriarchy. For Ard, Helen’s presence creates the cross-cultural tensions that allow this new vision to emerge.\footnote{115} The novel thus suggests that Isabella must pay the ultimate price for betraying her New England education, and becoming a complacent slave owner’s wife. Isabella

\footnote{114} This and the preceding quotation are from Mann, Juanita, 35-6, 38.

\footnote{115} Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann’s Juanita,” xiii.
makes the fatal mistake of replacing her U.S. pedagogical roots with the corrupted pedagogy of Cuban slavery and patriarchy, founded on the ideals of female, as well as slave, subjugation.

The novel further connects the powerlessness of the white female slave master and that of the black slave through the repeated clashes between Isabella and Camilla, who is twice described as looking like an “orang-outang.” Devious, willful, and deceitful, Camilla routinely floods the floors of the plantation house with the excuse of thoroughly cleaning them as a way to exasperate her mistress, and prevent the family from having free access to their favorite rooms for extended periods of time. With “ape-like arms” that “fall at her side,” and a “jet black” complexion, Camilla is described as a consummate performer for “there was no character which her genius could not assume.” Camilla, who functions as a negative double to Juanita’s lighter skin and unconditional devotion to the Rodríguez family, functions as the novel’s gothic “monster.” Not only is Camilla bent on tormenting Juanita, whom she hates because Juanita is more beautiful and a favorite with the Rodriguez’s, but Isabella confesses to Helen that she is more under Camilla’s power than the old enslaved housekeeper is under hers. Isabella explains that “if [Camilla] is displeased with me, she knows she can annoy me by having a very meager dinner, or by spoiling whatever she touches: I am her slave, I assure you.”

The novel suggests that it is the female slave owner’s inability to run her own household, by her own labor and effort, which gives the talented slave the power to “enslave” the master’s wife. Perhaps that is why, although Helen dislikes the Marquis and makes the

116 This and the preceding two quotations are from Mann, *Juanita*, 57, 187, 59.
point of not coming into contact with him, he is not demonized in the same way that Camilla is. While the Marquis is the novel’s gothic villain, Ard points out that Camilla’s representation evokes “the very color hierarchy [Mary] allegedly disdains suggesting abolitionist sentiment was not above reinscribing the racism it purported to eradicate.”

Further, the opposition between Isabella and Camilla again mirrors the opposition between New England and Cuba, and contributes to the suggestion that the latter has the power to corrupt – and eventually destroy – the former.

Later in the novel, Isabella tells Camilla’s story to Helen, noting how the slave “was spoiled” before she arrived at their plantation by a former overseer who “ruined her.” Isabella states that Camilla, and the overseer “became such tyrants together that the whole rule was taken from the master’s hands, till on one occasion they ventured a little too far, and [the overseer] was dismissed, and Camilla was sent into the field” so her proud spirit could be broken. While the reader might at first assume that Camilla was “ruined” in a sexual context, the suggestion is that what “spoils” Camilla is her access to power. That she is only humbled after being sent out of the house into the fields, hints at the possible motivations behind Camilla’s “subversive” behavior. Camilla’s representation unwittingly contradicts the repeated references in Mary’s text to the Cuban slaves as “a gentle race,” “a timid race,” and “a forgiving race.”

117 Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann’s Juanita,” xxi.
118 Mann, Juanita, 67.
119 Ard, xxx.
120 Mann, 75, 78, 213.
ability to wield power within an openly brutal and repressive system is evidence instead of slave resilience and savvy, as well as of how the slaves expressed resentment toward their masters. But because the novel’s racial politics cannot envision a smart, openly resistant, black slave, Camilla is portrayed as its gothic “monster.” Isabella concludes her story by stating that:

Since my régime she has taken me for her slave; but she is so useful I cannot do without her and when my children are ill she is like one inspired. She is never so well content as when the power is all in her own hands.  

Describing herself as enslaved by Camilla’s efficiency, Isabella persuades Helen to sympathize with her. Helen quickly agrees that she is “under bondage, indeed,” and asks Isabella’s forgiveness for having earlier (and repeatedly) reproached her. While Helen generally feels little sympathy for Isabella about her lax attitude toward slavery, she is sympathetic when Isabella casts herself in the role of the slave and Camilla in the role of tyrannical master. Helen may be an abolitionist, but she is not ready to grant a black woman the upper hand in this context. Instead, Camilla’s ability to enslave Isabella is another lesson in the colonial pedagogy that Helen identifies during her stay in Cuba.

Unlike sentimental novels, such as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), which purposefully drew connections between white women and black slaves, and between the project of domesticity and African colonization to advocate for abolitionism, *Juanita* questions and challenges such junctures in the colonial context. Through Camilla,

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121 Mann, *Juanita*, 67.

Lazo suggests, “the novel calls attention to how an enslaved housekeeper has the ‘power’
to exercise a limited agency given the context of her life.”\textsuperscript{123} I argue, however, that
Camilla becomes the gothic “monster” in the text because she, as a slave, controls the
household of which Isabella should be mistress. It is Isabella’s incompetence in
commanding her domestic sphere that grants Camilla her power. Because the household
was the assigned sphere of influence and authority for the white middle-class woman in
the nineteenth century, any woman – especially a U.S.-educated one – who relinquished
her duties had to be held accountable for such a lapse. This result would be especially
warranted, the novel suggests, when the failure is caused by the corruptive influences of
Cuban slavery. When asked by Helen why she does not get rid of Camilla, Isabella
replies:

> Because she knows how to do everything, and I cannot keep house
> without her. That she knows this, is my misfortune. She has a true genius
> for organization, and is accomplished in every household art. She has her
corps of sweepers, house-washers, dish-washers, laundry-women, errand-
> boys. She is the queen of pastry-cooks.\textsuperscript{124}

The reference to Camilla’s power being related to the slave knowing her own value, as
well as to her queen-like command of unnamed slaves who perform the household tasks,
points to the novel’s anxiety over the relationship between slavery and colonialism. The
benefits of slavery allow Isabella to live a life of luxury, but the novel suggests that the
price for that privilege is a type of colonial relationship in itself, which grants the
enslaved the power to enslave the enslaver. After listening to this, Helen once more

\textsuperscript{123} Lazo, “Against the Cuba Guide,” 191.

\textsuperscript{124} Mann, Juanita, 79.
exclaims: “What a life of slavery it is for you!” The text thereby implies that slavery not only shackles white women under a strict patriarchal system that leaves them powerless, but that slavery also prevents such women from exercising their manifest authority within the domestic sphere. While Ard argues that Isabella’s “ambiguous wasting illness” results from “her inability to square her life with the horrors of slavery,” I believe that the reasons for Isabella’s death go deeper than that. Helen suggests that though she can see no remedy for Isabella’s pain, she perceives a “moral darkness” closing around her childhood friend. The darkness that Helen perceives around her friend is not only that of slavery, but also the fact that Isabella has willingly abdicated the moral power she was vested with through her U.S. education. By ceding control over her domestic sphere – founded on U.S. pedagogical principles – to the black Cuban slave, Isabella loses her right to continue as the moral educator of her children.

After Isabella’s death, when Helen takes the children and Juanita to the United States, the narrator has the opportunity to discuss U.S. annexation of Cuba as the only “hope of change” for that island. The narrator explains that Cuba is mired in a series of problems that include the “impossibility” of preparing Cuban slaves for freedom, and “of making innovations among a people so nationally ignorant as the inhabitants of the Spanish colonies.” Although the narrator notes that the “possibility of annexation” is Cuba’s only hope, and that the U.S. “government desired the annexation for commercial and political interests,” the novel cautions that “these advantages would be accompanied

125 Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann’s Juanita,” xxvii.
126 This and the preceding quotation are from Mann, Juanita, 143, 201.
by many evils.” For Mary, the fact that Cuba has been a Spanish colony dooms the island because its people’s ignorance is racially and nationally inherent, and thereby not remediable. While Mary recognizes in her novel how former U.S. slaves have obtained education and risen above their initial bondage, she is not able to grant the same ability to Cuban slaves (despite, or perhaps because of, her representation of Camilla’s evident intelligence). Later, the narrator also points to how those who supported annexation as a way to save Cuba from its “sad state of anarchy” did not know that others wanted annexation to “extend the area of slavery” in the United States. The novel once more underlines the connections between slavery and colonialism to warn its readers about their dangerous interdependence.

*Juanita as allegory*

As a cautionary tale, and in gothic fashion, death is the way in which Mary’s novel marks the women who have somehow failed in their appointed roles. Isabella, a U.S.-educated white Cuban woman, must die because she fails to be faithful to her U.S. upbringing and falls short in her duty as mistress of her domestic sphere. Carolina, the sensual white Cuban woman whom Ludovico marries, also dies, as does the “Moorish” Juanita, of whom Ard argues that: “Neither her favored status as household ‘pet’ nor her light skin color are enough to save her from a death preordained by her tragic mulatta status.” But it is not just Juanita’s “tragic mulatta status” that preordains her death.

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128 Ard, “Mary Peabody Mann’s *Juanita*,” xxi.
There is no coincidence in the fact that all three women associated with Cuba die by the novel’s end. Unlike Isabella and Carolina, who are corrupted by their life in Cuba, Juanita is clearly not quite white, and has no connection to the United States. Instead, Juanita is the protagonist, not of the novel, since that role belongs to Helen, but of one of what Pratt describes as the “transracial love stories” that served to neutralize “concrete dimensions of slavery” in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European sentimental literature. For Pratt, these colonized heroes and heroines were “typically mulattoes or mestizos,” and represented the mixed-race groups who had “acquired dramatic new political importance during the anti-colonial uprisings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the Americas.”

Within that framework, Juanita operates not just as the “typical mulatta,” but also as the embodiment of the fledgling racially mixed Cuban nationality that had begun to struggle for recognition against Spain since the eighteenth century in Cuba. When Helen takes Juanita to the United States with her, she enables Ludovico to fall in love with her because U.S. soil becomes for the Cuban couple what Pratt describes as “privileged spaces” where labor and property relations can be suspended. Further, the novel suggests that the burgeoning nationality embodied by Juanita – the African-descended people who staged most of the revolts against Spain through the nineteenth century – has no chance of survival without U.S. interference. Once Juanita leaves the United States with Ludovico and returns to Cuba, she quickly


\[130\] Ibid, 100.
meets her death, and not even the protection of an enlightened Cuban slave owner is enough to save her.

Mary’s concerns about the extent of change that U.S. influence could exert on an intrinsically corrupt Cuba, and her worry over the potential corruption that Cuba could have on the United States, must have been fueled by the transformation she witnessed in her sister, Sophia. As I have discussed, Mary’s younger sister was not only basically cured of her life-long ailments during the visit to Cuba, but she also expressed a sexually charged excitement and an appreciation for her freer Cuba life, which largely ignored the plight of the slaves and the moral turpitude of Cuban slavery. While most scholars follow Elizabeth’s own claim that the Morrell family was the driving force behind Mary’s refusal to publish *Juanita* until after her death, I argue that it was perhaps the change that she witnessed in Sophia that not only persuaded Mary about Cuba’s corruptive power, but also contributed to her reticence to publish. For one, both Isabella and Juanita display traits of character that are easily traced back to Sophia. By the novel’s end, both characters are dead, punished for their different, if ultimately similar, connection to Cuban slavery and colonialism.

Early in the novel, the narrator describes the Marchioness “as an artist,” who enjoyed sketching nature, very much like Sophia did. When Helen begins to ask questions about slave torture, given that she believes the slaves to be “a kindly race,” the Marquesa’s response is: “but let us not talk of them any more now. I am afraid you will not observe all the beauties around you. Is not my rose hedge beautiful?” This desire to stop discussing slavery and focus, instead, on the aesthetics of the surrounding landscape,
echoes Sophia’s own attitude while in Cuba. As Sophia’s journal demonstrates, she often remarked on the beauty of a particular section of the Morrells’ extensive gardens, praising their ornate structures, ignoring that the work of slaves made them so. Unlike Sophia, however, who vocally complained about Mary’s harsh criticisms of her, the Marchioness does change because of Helen’s insistence that she give up her apathetic behavior. The narrator says that because of Helen’s influence, Isabella “for the first time” felt her husband as “the slaveholder. So apathetic do we become under an accepted wrong.” The novel credits Helen, “and circumstances of unusual occurrence,” for “breaking the spell” and reviving in Isabella “all her youthful abhorrence of slavery. She could never ‘make the best of it’ again, after looking upon it through Helen’s eyes.”

However, as I discussed above, this seeing through Helen’s eyes ultimately costs Isabella her life. Although Mary knew that Sophia was not about to lose her earthly life because of her attitude toward slavery and Cuba, Isabella’s similarities to Sophia function as an allegory about the moral cost of an apathetic and self-interested approach to slavery and colonialism.

If Isabella functions as Helen’s negative double, because, although she has a similar educational background as Helen’s, she allows Cuba to corrupt her U.S.-educated self, Juanita is the positive double of Camilla, the savvy, resistant slave. Described as “a Moor” by Isabella, Juanita has “straight hair” and “beautifully chiseled features,” and is the granddaughter of a slave purchased “in a coffle . . . , of which she was the only Moor.” Isabella explains that Moors are “not often enslaved. They have little

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131 All quotations on this page from Mann, Juanita, 32, 68, 106.
resemblance to other negroes; indeed they are not negroes.” Juanita’s mother, Isabella adds, “was the daughter of a white man, and that bleached her complexion. Juanita’s has been still farther changed by a similar parentage.” The text is thus heavily invested in underlining two characteristics about Juanita: that she is “not a negro” but of Moorish descent, and that she has several generations of white blood in her because of the white ascendants who have “farther changed” her. A second-generation Cuban slave, Juanita’s mysterious white parentage would most likely be traced to the Rodriguez men, if not the Marquis himself, then to the Marquis’ father. Juanita’s ancestry thus serves to bring her as close to Cuban whiteness as possible, although the novel cannot contemplate another position for her beyond that of a slave. As Isabella explains, Juanita “would no more take a negro for a husband than you or I would . . . They see that white men are superior in civilization; they learn to be ashamed of their African origin, which they often deny.” When Helen asks how she can make a distinction between Juanita and the other slaves, Isabella says “that has taken care of itself,” adding that:

> In almost every family you will see one of these girls attached to each child, but it is a source of great corruption. I have known of unmentionable evils growing out of it. My children have had no pets or servants of that kind but Juanita, who is thus far, I am sure, as good and pure as any of us.\(^\text{132}\)

The corruption, clearly, is of a sexual nature because of the availability of these not quite white women to their white masters.

For Isabella, Juanita is not only a slave but a “pet” of the family, someone who is more than simple property because she has added value and emotional significance. This

\(^{132}\) Mann, *Juanita*, 76.
is especially so because Juanita happens to have demonstrated “a wonderful genius for painting.” Isabella goes on to say that she uses the word genius because “the word talent does not describe it.” In Juanita’s portfolios, Isabella notes, “[y]ou will find the night-blooming cereus, our gigantic ceyba tree, and, indeed, all the peculiar tropical plants.” 133 The question that almost obligatorily arises in relation to this passage is why Mary would so evidently gift Juanita with the exact same talents that everyone in their circle of family and friends knew Sophia had? Mary does this to the point of referring not only to Juanita’s “genius” – a word used to describe Sophia’s own art – but also to drawings, the night-blooming cereus and the ceiba, in particular, which Sophia specifically addressed in her Cuba Journal. The possible answers are intriguing because Juanita represents the racially mixed Cuban, who is sympathetic to and welcomes U.S. influence. But, without U.S. intervention, that is, without Helen’s presence in Cuba, Juanita quickly dies. Her negative double, the subversive Camilla, meanwhile, disappears from the story, but is not killed off or harmed within the plot. This resilience on the part of Camilla suggests that colonialism enables the rebellious slave to prevail over both the white and mixed-race women in Cuba. Perhaps by giving Juanita some of Sophia’s most salient characteristics – namely, her genius and artistic sensibilities – Mary also wanted to issue a caution about how Cuba would be especially pernicious to those who were gifted and unique. Ultimately, in the same way that the Marchioness functions as Helen’s negative double, and Juanita as Camilla’s positive one, Cuba is represented as the negative double of the United States, a place too degraded and insidious to be saved by the precepts of Manifest

133 Mann, Juanita, 78.
Destiny. In the end, the novel is not about Juanita, who is of mixed race, Cuban and who dies, but about Helen, who is white, from New England, and who is enlightened and can enlighten others because she has experienced life on the surface of a volcano.

Although all of the Cuban women die, Helen escapes Cuba and lives to tell the story, and thereby exert her moral superiority as educator and protector. While Helen maintains her moral reservations about slavery in the United States, her experience in Cuba places her nation in perspective and makes it even more attractive than before she left. When Helen sees the sea as she is getting ready to depart Cuba, the narrator tells how: “Helen could have knelt in worship to it, for was it not the only path by which she could regain the lost heaven of home – a home which now seemed to her the very vestibule of heaven.” This opposition between the heavenly home of New England and her hellish Cuban abode, where the working slaves “looked more like demons than like human beings,” becomes even stronger by the novel’s end when the narrator draws an even greater difference between the United States and Cuba. As Helen contemplates how “the pure ocean would soon roll between her and this corruption,” she notes that:

she was still under the delusion that her country was free from it, . . . her heart bounded at the thought of returning to a society founded upon the theory of equality in human rights, and in which a more equal culture had already begun to establish an equality in social privileges. 134

The novel thus excuses Helen from being “deluded” into believing that the United States was not as corrupted by slavery as Cuba, because her nation is “founded upon the theory of equality.” This egalitarian theory becomes more important for Helen than the actual

134 This and the preceding quotations are from Mann, Juanita, 131, 205.
practice of equality because it is on theoretical, not practical, bases that she can best draw a clear line between the United States and Cuba. The nation-building myth of equality allows Helen to represent the United States as Cuba’s moral superior, despite their shared slave economies. In this way, Helen anticipates and disseminates the discourses of Manifest Destiny, which naturalized U.S. imperialism by erasing similarities in the Americas, and representing the United States as the moral standard destined to govern the hemisphere.

By the novel’s end, when Helen muses about this theoretical difference between the two locations, the novel again gives a nod to Manifest Destiny as the narrator tells us: “Our ideals go before us, ever beckoning on; . . . [Helen’s] faith was still unshaken that the influence of that theory would filter through the lowest depths of evil, even to slavery itself, the ‘sum of all villanies.’” But the influence of “that theory” clearly fails in the extra-continental context of Cuba. Still, the book suggests, its prevalence in the United States is its greatest achievement. In eradicating slavery, the United States lived up to its theory by matching it with practice. Although Helen’s U.S. influence is not enough to alter Cuba, the fact that she remains uncorrupted and resists the island’s wiles is enough to satisfy her. In the novel’s conclusion, the narrator basically gives up on Cuba, and reminds the reader that “justice is not always meted out here [on earth].” The novel also cautions that we should “keep our faith unsullied,” and trust that God “can effect that better judgment of the spirit to the event which secures the best ends of existence here and hereafter.”

As an example of the colonial gothic, Juanita functions both as a

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135 This and the preceding quotation are from Mann, Juanita, 205, 222.
pedagogical warning and an allegory. The novel crafts a story that Mary hoped would make her U.S. readers pause and rethink the nation’s Manifest Destiny in relation to Cuba, and realize that there were places better left to God for justice.

**Anticipating Colonialism: Juxtaposing the Emersons and Peabodys**

Reading the Emerson and Peabody texts together reveals not only the fledgling discourses of colonial desire for the Spanish Caribbean in the United States, but also how a U.S. national identity was crafted in literary texts of the 1830s in relation to extra-continental racial and national “Others.” Further, juxtaposing these texts enables us to see how each set of siblings participated in the initial economic incursion of the United States in Puerto Rico and Cuba, especially through Edward’s detailed descriptions of the sugar industry and through Mary’s ethnographic interest in Cuban slavery and society. The Emerson and Peabody texts share striking similarities, such as Charles’ and Mary’s advocacy against slavery, which contrasts against Edward’s and Sophia’s elision of that institution, as well as Charles’ and Sophia’s passive imperial gaze that non-violently possessed and appropriated the landscape. But these same similarities suggest that such frontier-breaking colonial visions were not clearly delineated along gender lines, as other scholars have suggested. I am primarily struck by how Charles in his letters represents himself as “a simple citizen” of the United States when constructing his identity in Puerto Rico. In contrast, Sophia represents herself as a queen, using the monarchical tropes of power against which the United States fashioned itself as a nation. Thus, in gendered terms, it is significant that Charles sees himself as operating in synchronicity with
republican ideals while Sophia self-fashions in ways that are clearly antipodal to such foundational notions of national identity. Still, this difference is not borne out by Mary’s writings, in which, like Charles, she fashions herself as fulfilling a kind of national civic duty by reporting on and denouncing Cuban slavery and U.S. colonialism. Further, what appears to be an initial gender division is later blurred by Charles’ self-fashioning as “king” in the excerpts of his journal published by Ralph Waldo. While Charles’ republican self-identification is strong in his letters, he echoes Sophia in deploying the monarchical trope when claiming possession of the Spanish Caribbean land. As I mentioned earlier, this suggests that the monarchical trope may have served as a compensatory move on the part of both Charles and Sophia, who traveled to the Spanish Caribbean because of illness.

Juxtaposing the texts of these siblings reveals intriguing connections and disconnections not only among them, but also within each pair. Edward’s and Charles’ writings on Puerto Rico specifically reveal how their construction of a U.S. identity in opposition to that of the inhabitants of that island anticipates the ways in which Ralph Waldo articulated the role of the “American Scholar” a few years later, suggesting a new way of understanding the source of that “Intellectual Declaration of Independence.” Edward’s and Charles’ writings further expand Pratt’s study of imperial travel writing by suggesting that in the U.S. context the brothers served as intellectual observers, not only as capitalist scouts or naturalists. Contrasting Sophia’s Cuba Journal with Mary’s Juanita, especially within the context of women’s frontier writings in the nineteenth century, shows how their approaches to the same colonial experience also expand our
understanding of those texts. For one, while Sophia does articulate Cuba as her personal Garden of Eden, it is not for domestic purposes but for sensual excitement and individual freedom. Sophia’s proto-feminist colonial poetics asserted her sexual agency through the aesthetics of her surroundings, thereby challenging the ideals of “true womanhood” that required chastity and established the domestic sphere as a woman’s only realm. Mary also took a different stand than most women writing in the colonial frontiers. For Mary, the extra-continental colony was not a source of personal fulfillment but a corruptive and harmful space of gothic confinement and terror, where the dysfunction and disproportion of the colonial culture infected and ruined the aesthetics of the tropical setting. Mary’s conviction about Cuba’s negative influence was based on what she saw was Sophia’s transformation during her stay in the Spanish Caribbean colony. Thus, by cautioning in 1887 that people might live on the surface of a volcano, ignoring its potential destructiveness, Mary’s Juanita raised an early anti-colonial red flag that, though unheeded, anticipated not only the actual rise of the United States as a colonial empire in 1898, but also its aftermaths.

Because Mary’s colonial gothic novel spans the period between the 1830s and the 1880s, it serves as a good segue into the second part of my dissertation, which examines transcolonial writings from and about Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and Hawai’i. By the 1880s, three anti-colonial writers surfaced in both the Spanish Caribbean and the Pacific. These three men not only anticipated the rise of the United States as a full-fledged empire by century’s end, but also proposed their own transcolonial ideas of how such a geopolitical change could be balanced. Ramón Emeterio Betances in Puerto Rico,
José Martí in Cuba and José Rizal in the Philippines all grew up under the Spanish empire, and all saw its eclipse as a sign that the United States would promptly rise in its stead. Martí died in 1895, killed in battle with Spanish forces, while Rizal was executed by Spanish authorities a year later for his subversive activities against Spain. Betances died in September 1898 after seeing their joint anticipations fulfilled when the United States invaded Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and annexed Hawai’i earlier that year. Also in 1898, the deposed indigenous queen of Hawai’i, Lili’uokalani, published her autobiography. Like Mary before her, Lili’uokalani hoped that her text would serve as an anti-colonial cautionary tale. Also similar to Mary, Lili’uokalani fused autobiography, history and travel literature in a text that openly challenged the dominant colonial representations of her people. Such colonial renderings included those promoted in the writings of Mark Twain, who visited Hawai’i in 1866. Twain was the most famous U.S. lecturer about Hawai’i and pro-annexationist of his time before becoming a vocal anti-imperialist after 1898. The second part of this dissertation moves this study from the colonial visions of the Emersons and the Peabodys to the transcolonial revisions of Betances in Puerto Rico, Martí in Cuba, and Rizal in the Philippines, and to the colonial translations of Twain and the indigenized translations of Queen Lili’uokalani in Hawai’i.
PART 2

TRANSCOLONIAL REVISIONS

The institutions of the United States are surely worthy of admiration; their constitution does honor to humanity. But are we sure that when it is transplanted to our climate and applied to our race it will produce the same enviable fruits? Ah! Do not plant the apple in Habana, nor the palm tree in Washington! Both will die!

Ramón Emeterio Betances

The first part of this dissertation identified the ways in which early colonial and anti-colonial visions on Puerto Rico and Cuba were developed and disseminated by two sets of New England writers in the United States. Starting in the early 1830s, the Emerson brothers, Edward Bliss Emerson and Charles Chauncy Emerson, wrote colonial letters that discursively possessed the island of Puerto Rico through what Mary Louise Pratt describes as an “imperial gaze.” Pratt focuses mostly on British writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and my work expands on hers by examining the Emerson brothers as representatives of an early U.S. imperial gaze in the nineteenth century. In Cuba, the Peabody sisters, Sophia and Mary, respectively and alternatively

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articulated two divergent colonial visions to describe their experiences on that island. In her journalized letters, Sophia developed a colonial poetics, which celebrated the colonial contact zone as a space that enabled a proto-feminist sensuality. Mary, in a novel based on her letters, represented Cuba as the location of a horror-filled colonial gothic where slavery and colonialism functioned as twinned forces with the power to haunt and corrupt the U.S. nation. Composed between the 1830s and 1850s, the publication of Mary’s novel in 1887 provides an appropriate segue into the second part of my dissertation.

This two-chapter part focuses on the period after the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865) and Reconstruction (1866-1877), as efforts to purchase Cuba from Spain regained momentum, as the remaining colonial possessions of Spain in the Caribbean and the Pacific began to rebel against its rule, and as the United States began to actively entertain the possibility of becoming a colonial power both in the Americas and the Pacific. By the 1880s, old and new imperial powers – Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia – were involved in a “great scramble . . . to divide what is now called the Third World into colonies and spheres of influence among themselves, so as to acquire new markets, investment opportunities, and raw materials.”

The late nineteenth century was a time of competing empires, and the United States claimed its place in the competition. By that time, the last colonies of Spain in the Americas, Puerto Rico and Cuba, depended heavily on the United States as their main trading partner. They also looked toward that nation both as a potential colonial threat and as a possible ally in their struggles to attain the political sovereignty they sought for their own islands. As a counterpoint to the colonial

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visions espoused by the Emerson brothers and the Peabody sisters, this part of my study examines how writers from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and Hawai’i revised these limited colonial understandings of their nations between the 1880s and 1890s. These texts offer a contrapuntal and transhemispheric understanding of the discourses of U.S. imperialism in the late nineteenth century in both the Americas and the Pacific. Chapter 3 juxtaposes the writings – letters, journalistic essays, novels and short novellas – of three major anti-colonial intellectuals and rebels: the Puerto Rican Ramón Emeterio Betances (1827-1898), the Cuban José Martí (1853-1895), and the Filipino José Rizal (1861-1896). Protagonists in the theater of anti-imperialist struggle against a weakened Spanish empire, these three men severally, and not coincidentally, anticipated the rise of a U.S. empire that would supplant Spain’s dominion in their regions. Despite their important roles in their shared geopolitical stage, these writers have been paired only in a few scholarly studies that compare Betances with Martí, or Martí with Rizal. Before my study, only Benedict Anderson has studied them all together, and while not in equal detail, at least as significant voices within their contemporaneous historical context.

3 The novella, Betances’ preferred literary genre, is longer than the short story but shorter than the novel. In her anthology of Puerto Rican writers, Josefina Rivera de Alvarez identifies Betances as one of the earliest “novelists” in Puerto Rico, describing Betances’ work as “novelistic fantasy.” See Josefina Rivera de Alvarez, *Literatura puertorriqueña: su proceso en el tiempo* (Madrid: Editorial Partenón, 1983), 180.


Expanding on Anderson’s work, as well as existing scholarship on each of the three writers, this chapter contributes a new comparative examination of how Betances, Martí and Rizal re-envisioned a future for their islands. Because they envisioned their nations and regions free of colonial domination, whether from Spain, the United States, or any other colonial power, I identify these writers as transcolonial. Further, because their writings openly challenged and revised the competing and intersecting discourses of late nineteenth century global imperialisms, I categorize their texts as revisions. I expand on the definition of the transcolonial proposed by Francophone scholar Françoise Lionnet, who argues that this analytical lens trains its focus on the interconnections among sites that were affected by the co-joined forces of imperialism and colonialism. While these two historical forces are linked symbiotically, they are not synonymous. Imperialism identifies the expansion of one nation’s hegemony through territorial, political and economic dominance over other nations or peoples, while colonialism describes the actual acquisition and/or settling of territories and their control for imperial purposes. For Lionnet, the transcolonial stresses “the spatial dimensions at the heart of the history of colonialism,” at the same time that it privileges “a relational approach that takes the form of networks among sites marked differentially by the imperial project and the colonial will to power.” In contrast to transnational and postcolonial approaches, the transcolonial looks beyond national or temporal boundaries to discover how spaces,

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without losing their particularities, share similarities produced by the twinned forces of empire and colonialism.⁷

I use the term transcolonial to identify not only how Betances, Martí and Rizal understood their nations to be located at the juncture of several competing colonialisms, but also how they recognized and articulated the ways in which power operates across different colonial contexts. I identify their writings as revisions because their shared and respective colonial contexts become the foundation of their literary texts, which re-envisioned both their nations and the United States from perspectives that were not those of a subaltern. Given the global ramifications of imperialism, I am interested in how these writers articulated three different types of revisions through both form and content. In the late nineteenth century, Betances, Martí, and Rizal not only wrote within a context of simultaneous and competing colonialisms, but they also transcended such contexts by advocating for the political sovereignty of their nations and regions. In this way, their writings do not so much subsume the local into the global but reveal how the local becomes the global precisely because of the globalizing forces of imperialism. Some of their contemporaries and compatriots advocated for sovereignty from Spain, or for annexation to the United States in the case of Cuba and Puerto Rico, or Japan in the case of the Philippines. Betances, Martí, and Rizal maintained a steadfast transcolonial vision, which rejected all colonialisms, privileging their nations’ sovereignty, and the liberation of their entire regions from any and all imperialisms.

⁷ Lionnet, “Narrating,” 69.
Because these writers not only defined themselves in opposition to Spain, but also against the United States, I examine how they represented the rising U.S. empire in their writings. Betances was among the earliest critics of the United States, casting it as a “minotaur,” the half man-half bull monster of Greek mythology that devoured humans and which symbolized Cretan dominance over Athens. By 1870, Betances proposed an Antillean Federation (for the non-English-speaking Caribbean) or a “Great Nation” that would be capable of withstanding the U.S. imperial push. Also as a balance against U.S. imperialism in the hemisphere, which he described as the “giant of seven-league boots,” Martí in 1891 envisioned a united Spanish America (including the Spanish-speaking Caribbean). This America, in opposition to that Other America that was the United States, would refashion itself not based on, but in opposition to, European and U.S. models. Finally, Rizal in 1890 articulated a transcolonial nationalism, which sought to unite the entire Philippine archipelago, rejecting assimilation to Spain, and avoiding the pitfalls that he saw as characteristic of the Spanish American republics and the United States. The transcolonial revisions of all three writers shared a distinct commitment to espousing a regional worldview that privileged the colonial subject’s experience and that sought to prevail over the established models of “civilization” exported by European and U.S. colonizers. In that same light, these nineteenth-century writers theorized about the physical and psychological effects of colonialism, anticipating many of the precepts studied in the field of postcolonial studies today.

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In their writings, Betances, Martí, and Rizal anticipated the moment in 1898 when the United States became a colonial power after acquiring Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Hawai‘i during the Spanish-American War. That is why their texts function as a fitting presage to Chapter 4, which examines the autobiography of deposed Hawaiian Queen Lili‘uokalani (1838-1917). Her memoir, published in February 1898, is the most significant indigenous text published in English as a challenge to U.S. annexation, which occurred only a few months after its publication. Unlike Betances, Martí and Rizal, who were of European or mixed blood, Lili‘uokalani was an indigenous queen ousted by U.S.-backed opponents to pave the way for the annexation of her islands. She used that experience to write an autobiography that she hoped would serve as an anti-colonial warning for the United States (similar in that way to the work of Mary Peabody that I discussed in Chapter 2). In her work, Lili‘uokalani also challenged the colonial representations of Hawai‘i that had become cultural commonplaces by 1898. Such representations included the speeches and writings of Mark Twain, who was perhaps the most famous U.S. writer to represent the Hawaiian Islands after his visit there in 1866.

In a contrapuntal manner, Chapter 4 contrasts the colonial translations of Mark Twain against what I describe as the indigenized translations of Queen Lili‘uokalani, who deployed both European and indigenous themes and metaphors to advocate against U.S. colonialism, and for the sovereignty of her people. Like her transcolonial counterparts in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines, Lili‘uokalani grew up within the same context of competing imperialisms, specifically between an eclipsing British Empire and a rising
U.S. one. But unlike Betances, Martí, and Rizal, who developed regional anti-colonial visions, Lili’uokalani chose instead to set the British Empire as a counterpoint to what she saw as the threat of a U.S. empire in the Pacific. Also unlike Betances, Martí, and Rizal, who anticipated U.S. colonialism but did not experience it, Lili’uokalani wrote her autobiography well within the U.S. colonial context of 1898. This meant that Lili’uokalani had to deploy a much more nuanced rhetorical strategy, and she turned to translation as her transcolonial weapon of choice.
CHAPTER 3

TRANSCOLONIAL CALIBANS: BETANCES, MARTI AND RIZAL

The final decades of the nineteenth century were convulsed by geopolitical changes that not only set the stage for, but also fueled the transcolonial revisions of the writers whose texts anchor this part of my study. Irma Rivera Nieves, a Puerto Rican scholar on Rizal, describes his time as one in which “Europe was slicing up the world and the U.S. was preparing to dispute them its piece, [but] Spain . . . could not recover from the wound it received with the loss of its American empire.”9 This era of rampant and clashing imperialisms also was one in which a variety of emerging political ideals, including liberalism, republicanism and nationalism, contributed to what Benedict Anderson describes as that era’s characteristic “globe-stretching” and “nation-linking.” These global connections were further facilitated by major technological innovations and improvements, such as the telegraph, the international mail system, steamships and railways, which greatly eased international travel and communications.10 Also significantly, by the 1880s most of the world, including Brazil and Cuba, which were the


10 This and preceding quotation are from Anderson, Under Three Flags, 1, 3.
last remaining “slave states,” had abolished slavery.\textsuperscript{11} This shift from slave-labor and agriculture-based economic systems to greater industrialization and mechanization propelled the historical shift that by the 1880s registered a sea change in the centuries-old geopolitical rivalries between Britain, France, and Spain. That is when the world saw the emergence of new empires and empires-to-be, such as Germany, the United States, Italy, and Japan. Because of the junctures created by the fierce competition among waning and rising empires, Anderson describes the historical context of Betances, Martí, and Rizal as one of “early globalization.” In turn, this anticipatory globalization made possible the “transglobal coordination” that all three writers benefited from and exploited.\textsuperscript{12} For one, all of them inspired, masterminded and/or coordinated anti-colonial rebellions not only from within their respective island nations, but also as exiles and émigrés abroad. This is only one of the several shared experiences that transformed these three men from regional anti-colonial icons into global political and literary figures.\textsuperscript{13} The main element of their transcoloniality is precisely the transglobal perspective and anti-colonial activism that the work of these three men puts in evidence.

While Betances and Martí corresponded, they appear never to have met in person, and while Rizal volunteered to serve as a physician to Spanish soldiers fighting in Cuba

\textsuperscript{11} Anderson, \textit{Under Three Flags}, 142.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 4, 3, 2.

\textsuperscript{13} I am using here Anderson’s definition of nation, nationality and nation-ness as independent of the nation-state. Anderson proposes that the nation “is an imagined political community,” and he uses the word “imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Anderson further argues that “nations dream of being free,” and that the “gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.” Thus, while the nation state is the goal of a nation, it is not a prerequisite for its existence. See Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism} (New York: Verso, 2000), 6-7.
in 1895, and Betances invested funds in the success of the Philippine revolution of 1896, no evidence has been found that Betances or Martí corresponded with Rizal during their lifetimes. But the lack of personal exchange did not mean that they were unknown or insignificant to each other. Martí wrote about Betances’ efforts to liberate Puerto Rico from the Spanish colonial yoke; and Betances in turn hailed Martí, and not only wrote in support of the Philippine revolution, but also tried to send firearms to the rebels. Betances also mailed to Florida Rizal’s last poem, written shortly before his execution, so it could be published there in 1897.\(^{14}\) Although their physical paths appear not to have crossed, the three men shared startling commonalities, starting with the fact that they all hailed from colonized island nations. Betances and Rizal came from well-to-do families who could afford their education, and the more humble Martí was able to study in Cuba thanks to his godfather. All were greatly influenced by the European ideologies that arose in their time, and they all shared the experience of exile. All three had to leave their respective islands because of their subversive anti-colonial activities. Betances was exiled mostly in Paris but also spent time in New York and in other Caribbean islands, Martí spent the bulk of his time as an émigré in New York City, and Rizal traveled all over Europe, visiting the United States briefly in 1888. All three were well-traveled, cosmopolitan men whose global experience gave them a transcolonial vision that enabled them to anticipate the United States as a potential threat to their respective regions before the Spanish-American War proved them right.

There are also interesting differences among them, such as the fact that Martí was a first-generation *criollo* of Spanish descent, while Betances and Rizal were of mixed ancestry, the former a *mulato* of Spanish and African descent, and the latter a *mestizo*, part *indio* (as the indigenous peoples of the Philippines were described), Chinese, and Spanish. They each spoke at least three languages and Martí learned English well enough to translate U.S. works into Spanish. But while Martí and Betances spoke Spanish as their first language, Rizal’s first language was Tagalog, and he perceived the teaching of Spanish in the Philippines as an assimilationist tool. They all developed into fervent nationalists who were ultimately persuaded that armed rebellion was inevitable, but while Betances and Martí conceived nationalism as trumping race and ethnicity, Rizal seems to have edged more toward an ethnic nationalism by the time of his death. Also, while Martí died in battle during the Cuban Revolution in 1895, and Betances famously masterminded and funded from Paris the 1868 revolt against Spain in Puerto Rico, most scholars have identified Rizal as having an ambiguous, or even ambivalent, relationship to armed struggle. Although Rizal disavowed the 1896 revolt that ultimately led to his own execution, Simoun, the protagonist of Rizal’s last novel, *El

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15 Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 132. Under Spanish colonialism, the term *criollo* (or Creole) initially described those who were of Spanish descent but who had been born in the colonies. By the late nineteenth century, the term had also come to describe mixed-blood ancestry. *Mestizo* tended to describe a person who had European and indigenous blood, while *mulato* described those with mixed European and African blood. When Martí speaks of a *mestizo* America, however, he utilizes *mestizo* to include all racial mixtures.

16 Ibid, 87-8. Anderson notes that “in Rizal’s time it has been estimated that only about 3 percent of the population of the Philippines had any command of Spanish, which was unique in the Spanish empire.” He also argues that Filipinio anti-colonial activists “were inevitably faced with a hard choice which was not open to Cubans and Puerto Ricans: to reject Spanish or spread it.”

17 Ibid, 143.
*filibusterismo (Subversion)*, published in 1891, is a jaded revolutionary who advocates a presciently Fanonian anti-colonial violence as the only effective response. To this day, all three men are nationalist icons in their respective countries, with Martí hailed both in Communist Cuba and in exiled Cuban communities in Florida with the same passion. The figure of Rizal, widely revered in the Philippines, was appropriated early in the twentieth century by U.S. officials to argue that the United States brought to the Philippines what he had always wanted for his country. In Puerto Rico, Betances also is widely considered *el Padre de la Patria* by pro-independence supporters.

Not surprisingly, these men have been studied widely in their own countries, and Martí also has received substantial attention in the U.S. academy. But while U.S. scholars have done some critical work on Rizal, Betances’ work is rarely studied in the United States, and most of his works are not translated from their original French or Spanish into English. Thus, all of the English translations of Betances’ work herein are my own. This chapter takes a transhemispheric view that juxtaposes some of these writers’ most well-known works with some of their less-studied ones. My goal is to identify the ways in which these writers fashioned their particular transcolonial revisions: How did the Spanish colonial experience affect each of these writers similarly and differently, and what do these junctures and divergences reveal about the transglobal world of the late nineteenth century? How were they influenced by their exposure to U.S. culture, and how did they represent the empire-in-the-making that they saw as a

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19 Félix Ojeda Reyes and Paul Estrade, *Pasión por la Libertad*, xi.
potential rival for Spain? What are the main elements of transcolonialism that the texts of these three writers reveal, and how do they illuminate the significance of a transcolonial framework? To answer these questions, I focus on The Travels of Escaldado, published in 1889, the last short novella that Betances wrote. I also examine “Our America,” the most well-known essay that Martí wrote about and in the United States during his fifteen-year stay in New York City, published in 1891. Finally, I analyze the 1890 essay, titled “The Philippines: A Century Hence,” which Rizal wrote after his visit to the United States in 1888. I discuss each author in chronological order by age, and I have chosen these specific works from the trove of writings produced by each because they are representative examples of my idea of transcolonial revision.

The Calibanesque

One way to understand the elements of the transcolonial is to draw from the analytical framework of the “Calibanesque” proposed by Cuban cultural theorist Roberto Fernández Retamar. In a 1971 essay titled “Caliban: Notes Toward a Discussion of Culture in our America,” Fernández Retamar proposed the literary figure of Caliban as the ideal metaphor for representing the “cultural situation” of the colonized peoples of the Americas. To that end, Fernández Retamar traces the literary history of Caliban, from Shakespeare’s The Tempest (1611), where he is portrayed as the deformed slave robbed of his island who rebukes Prospero “For learning me your language”; to the Uruguayan

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20 See Fernández Retamar, Caliban and Other Essays (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), 14.
José Enrique Rodó’s choice of Ariel in his same-titled 1900 text to represent the Latin American republics’ struggle against the United States as Caliban; to twentieth-century anti-colonial texts, like Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest*, which recast Caliban as representative of “the colonial.” It is this latter representation that Fernández Retamar adopts, suggesting that:

> To assume our condition as Caliban implies rethinking our history from the other side, from the viewpoint of the other protagonist. The other protagonist of *The Tempest* . . . is not of course Ariel but, rather, Prospero.

In this passage, Fernández Retamar breaks from Latin American intellectuals who adopted the character of Ariel (the airy spirit who serves Prospero) as their continental symbol, and cast the United States as Caliban. By establishing Caliban and Prospero as the two protagonists of *The Tempest*, Fernández Retamar locates Caliban (the colonized) as an equal, not in terms of power but of significance, within the colonial playing field. In doing this, Fernández Retamar identifies Caliban as the “degraded vision” created by Prospero that must be reclaimed in order to challenge the effects of colonial degradation. As he argues, “That we ourselves may have at one time believed in this version only proves to what extent we are infected with the ideology of the enemy.” When the transcolonial figure of Caliban is reclaimed, colonial ideology gets turned upside down, and the distorted version of the colonized is pro-actively refashioned in the service of anti-colonial struggle.

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21 Fernández Retamar, *Caliban*, 6, 12.

22 Ibid, 16, 7.
Described by Fredric Jameson as “the Latin American equivalent of Said’s *Orientalism*” (although the Caliban essay predates Said’s work by several years), Fernández Retamar’s theoretical framework is primarily focused on his interpretation of Martí’s “Our America.”23 Identifying Martí as “the first militant anti-imperialist of our continent,” Fernández Retamar argues that it was the Cuban patriot’s fifteen-year residence in the United States between 1880 and 1895 that gave Martí the ability “to detect within that country the emergence of [U.S.] imperialism.”24 For Fernández Retamar, Martí exemplifies a “Calibanesque vision” that advanced the viewpoint of that “other protagonist” of the colonial contact zone: the colonized. By representing Caliban as the anti-colonial protagonist, not as a victim, the Calibanesque describes the simultaneously pro-active and reactive struggles found in colonial encounters. Fernández Retamar argues that Martí’s essay represents the Calibanesque because the Cuban patriot proposed an anti-imperialist transamericanism that integrated “our America” (by which he meant Spanish America, not the United States). Further, Martí also envisioned a *mestizo* (or racially mixed) America whose transnational character would transcend its national groups while fully incorporating marginalized indigenous and African populations. Fernández Retamar’s notion of the Calibanesque is particularly helpful when analyzing Martí’s work, and not only because Martí anticipated the rise of a U.S. empire. By focusing on “the other protagonist” of colonialism, meaning Caliban, we are reminded that the very description of 1898 as the year of the “Spanish-American War”

23 See Jameson, Foreword to *Caliban and Other Essays*, by Roberto Fernández Retamar (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), viii.

elides the fact that Spain and the United States were not the only nations involved in that conflict. As Puerto Rican historian Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones argues, “the official vocabulary” used to designate the events of 1898 suggests that “only imperial masters were historical subjects.”

Martí’s transamerican vision is Calibanesque by definition because it casts the American hemisphere as a pro-active actor, not a victim, thereby challenging the historical and literary assumptions that naturalize U.S. imperialism.

Using Fernández Retamar’s notion of the Calibanesque as my transcolonial lens, and focusing on how the Caliban metaphor transcends colonial spaces, this chapter focuses on Martí, Betances and Rizal as theorists of transcoloniality. Specifically, I discuss Betances’ anti-colonial literary style, Martí’s vision of the American hemisphere, and Rizal’s nationalism. The worldview that these three men shared was further enhanced by the fact that both Betances and Martí lived in New York City in the 1890s, while Rizal visited San Francisco in 1888. Their subversive viewpoints, and their first-hand exposure to the United States, allowed them to train their Calibanesque gaze on this country, and to fashion transcolonial revisions to the prevailing colonial visions of their time. While Part 1 of the dissertation engaged the imperial gaze, as described by Pratt and as evidenced by early U.S. writings about Puerto Rico and Cuba, this chapter specifically examines a form of counter-gaze, one that looks upon the colonizer from the colonized point of view. In writing about their impressions, these writers concomitantly, if separately, anticipated the rise of the U.S. empire at the close of the nineteenth century. I expand on Fernández Retamar’s idea of the Calibanesque to deploy it

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transhemispherically, by including Betances and Rizal, along with Martí, as the “first militant anti-imperialists” in both the Spanish and U.S. imperial contexts. In fact, because Betances was already twenty-six years old when Martí was born, the Puerto Rican writer presaged many of Martí’s transcolonial revisions. By simple chronology, Betances more accurately deserves to be described as “first” for his early anti-colonial militancy and perspective. I argue that because all three men proposed a Calibanesque vision of the United States, they should be considered important protagonists, not supporting actors or secondary characters, in the theater of late nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism.

My comparative study, which for purposes of this dissertation is limited in scope, begins by discussing one of Betances’ short novellas, which he wrote in French, and on which there appears to be no prior critical work done in the United States. Betances died in exile in France on September 16, 1898, several months after seeing his fears materialize as the United States took colonial possession of Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898. I then consider Martí’s most anthologized essay, “Our America,” which was published in 1891. That essay is among the hundreds he wrote during the fifteen years he worked as a correspondent in New York City for several Latin American newspapers. Martí, who lived as an exile in the United States, wrote regularly to chronicle U.S. events for his Latin American readership, commenting on timely topics such as the violent racism against African Americans, and the dispossession of American Indians. Martí also wrote incisively about U.S. literary figures, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman,

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and he also was keenly concerned with this country’s potential development as an imperialist power. From Martí I segue into Rizal, and I have chosen his 1890 essay, “The Philippines: A Century Hence,” as my main text of study. Unlike Martí and Betances, who advocated revolution, Rizal publicly disavowed armed revolt, greatly concerned with the idea that a colonized people who were not familiar with freedom would easily fall prey to tyranny.27 Like Martí, who died leading an expeditionary force in the 1895 Cuban war of independence against Spain, Rizal was executed by a firing squad a year later for his alleged involvement in the 1896 Philippine revolution against Spain.28

Although these three men played protagonist roles on the stage in which a waning Spanish imperialism clashed against the fledgling U.S. empire, these writers “virtually never mentioned one another in the entire corpus of their respective writings.”29 However, in the same way that the histories of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines were already intertwined under the Spanish flag, they became further connected after their colonization by the United States. Paradoxically, they simultaneously became more separated, especially in scholarly terms, since the three have been rarely studied together, except in comparative historical studies about 1898. The intellectual and life paths of Betances, Martí, and Rizal set the standard for a Calibanesque perspective. The Calibanesque is perforce transcolonial because, as Fernández Retamar suggests, Caliban has come to symbolically represent the colonized, regardless of historical or geographical


28 Ibid, 93.

29 Ibid, 94.
contexts. The figure of Caliban, as a theoretical model that helps us understand the tendrils of empire, transcends hemispheres, nations and cultures, just as Betances, Martí, and Rizal did. While their transcolonial visions were simultaneously national and regional, they also were concomitantly transnational and global. Their perspective was one that edged them beyond reaction toward pro-action, ushering them into active, rather than just reactive, roles. In their writings, these three writers not only anticipated the global future of imperialism, but also envisioned ways in which any and all colonialisms could be combated.

**Transcolonial form in Betances’ *The Travels of Escaldado***

In 1859, Betances published in Paris a novella in French, titled “The Virgin of Borinquen.”30 Clearly influenced by Edgar Allan Poe’s story, “The Oval Portrait,” which serves as Betances’ epigraph, the novella is set in an insane asylum in France where a Puerto Rican doctor has come to visit.31 There he is taken to see his “compatriot,” a young man who is demented, and who asks the doctor whether he knew the beloved woman he still mourns for, because the doctor has said he hails from the Antilles. The

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30 Obtaining translations into Spanish of Betances’ novellas written originally in French was difficult, since only one published translation exists of “The Virgin of Borinquen,” and no translation of “The Travels of Escaldado” has been published at this time. The translations into English of both texts herein are my own. For the translation into Spanish of “The Virgin” see Ramón Emeterio Betances, *La Virgen de Borinquen y Epistolario Intimo*, ed. Ada Suárez Díaz (San Juan: Instituto de Cultural Puertorriqueña, 1981), 3-11.

31 In Poe’s the “Oval Portrait,” a young painter marries a beautiful woman, but neglects her health as he starts to fervently paint her portrait, failing to notice that she withers as the painting becomes more life-like. At the moment that he finished the portrait, her beloved dies. Betances’ biographer, Ada Suárez Díaz notes that Poe’s stories began to be translated into French in 1845 but that it was Charles Baudelaire’s translations in 1852 that were the most significant and the ones Betances read. Suárez Díaz also notes that Poe was very popular in France at the time Betances was there. See Suárez Díaz, “Introducción,” in *La Virgen de Borinquen y Epistolario Intimo* by Ramón Emeterio Betances (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1981), vii.
young man then tells the story of how his innocent beloved gladly left her island to be with him “where the heavy fogs occlude the infinite splendors, and before he had finished calling her the ‘Virgin of Borinquen,’ [the indigenous Taíno name of Puerto Rico], he finds them both one night “as if in a tomb.” “I have heard the whispers of death! I have lost my sad, adored virgin!” says the young man, who then tries to stab himself to death with his empty right hand. When the young man realizes anew that he cannot kill himself, he tells the doctor about his nightmares, filled with bats and crows and tarantulas and serpents, whose purpose is to take away the papers on which he is trying to reorder his thoughts, and thereby regain sanity. The young man then confesses to the doctor that his mission in life is to “study the unknown sciences and discover the world that SHE inhabits.” Thus, he says, he searches for that Spirit who can teach him what he needs to know so he can free her from death’s grip.\(^{32}\) An old woman in the asylum, who has repeatedly ridiculed the young man, points to him and laughs after she hears his story, foretelling that his mission will fail. This enrages the young man, who curses her, and then he drops dead in front of the doctor.

This short novella, the earliest literary work published by Betances, at first appears to have little apparent meaning until one reads Betances’ biography, and learns that the story is semi-autobiographical. The author represented himself both in the characters of the doctor and of the young man. In early 1859, after Betances proposed marriage to his eighteen-year-old niece, Maria del Carmen Henri Betances, she happily traveled to Paris to meet him. A practicing doctor, Betances had exiled himself in France

\(^{32}\) Betances, La Virgen, 11.
to avoid being arrested by Spanish authorities in Puerto Rico because of his abolitionist and separatist activities. The wedding was scheduled for May 1859, but in early April, Lita, as she was known, contracted typhoid fever and died a few weeks before they were to be married. Racked with guilt and feeling impotent despite his training as a physician, on April 28 Betances wrote to his uncle, sounding like a character created by Poe:

Proud death has wanted to make me see that she could do more than I [and] her, but I [challenge] all the powers of the universe to destroy the love that embraces me, and if I can do more than they, let God fall with all that is adored along with Him, and let my immortal idol shine.  

Betances then transformed the love for his beloved into the love for his patria (the fatherland), merging them and describing Lita as “la Borinqueña” [the woman from Borinquen] because “she was the mysterious personification of our country; all love, all grace and all virtue.” The novella, published shortly after Lita’s death, is not only a fictionalized account of Betances’ personal struggle with guilt and despair after the death of his beloved, but also an allegory of his patria because this virginal woman comes to represent a nascent nation that was about to realize sovereignty, just as Lita was about to reach full womanhood by becoming Betances’ wife. Instead, outside forces would end Puerto Rico’s chances of independence, just as they cut short Lita’s life. The story also is an eerie foreshadowing of what eventually happens to Betances, who dies as an exile in

33 Ada Suárez Díaz, *El Antillano: Biografía del Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, 1827-1898* (San Juan: Corripio, 1988), 30. I have changed the word choices from the Spanish translation to make the English translation clearer.

34 Ibid, 34. “La Borinqueña” is also the title of the Puerto Rican national anthem.

35 Ibid, 36. Although Betances buried Lita’s body in Mennecey, France, shortly after her death, in July he decided to take her back to Puerto Rico, and had her body exhumed. He transported her body by ship first to Saint Thomas, which meant forty days of crossing the Atlantic, and finally to Puerto Rico where she was finally laid to rest in November 1859.
Paris, ill, impoverished, and heartbroken only months after Puerto Rico is invaded by the United States in 1898.

Born in 1827 in the southwestern town of Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, Betances was the youngest child and only son of a wealthy, slave-owning immigrant from Santo Domingo and a *criolla* from Cabo Rojo. In 1837, after his mother’s death, his father sent him to study in Toulouse, France, where he completed two bachelor’s degrees, one in sciences and one in letters. Betances returned briefly to Puerto Rico in 1848, after participating in the revolt in Paris that year, and then went back to France to study medicine. He did not return to Puerto Rico until 1856, when he distinguished himself as a physician during a cholera epidemic. During those early years in Puerto Rico, Betances became a fervent abolitionist, founding a secret society to that end, and dedicating himself to publicly redeeming slave children, which did not endear him to Spanish authorities. That is when he was forced into his first exile in 1858, which set the stage not only for his long-standing role as a newspaper correspondent, but also for the events he fictionalized in “The Virgin of Borinquen.” In 1865, Betances returned to Puerto Rico to practice medicine, and continued his anti-colonial efforts against Spanish domination in the Antilles. His separatist activities took him to New York City, where Cubans and Puerto Ricans had joined in their revolutionary efforts against Spain.

Shortly before leaving New York in 1867, a few years after the U.S. Civil War ended, Betances signed a declaration of his intention to adopt U.S. citizenship.\(^{37}\) In that

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\(^{36}\) Suárez Díaz, *El Antillano*, 13. Betances’ birth was originally recorded in the Book of Pardos (or Brown People) as opposed to in the Book of Whites but was later transferred to that book in 1840.

\(^{37}\) The biographical facts in these two paragraphs are from Suárez Díaz, 15-6, 22, 30.
document, Betances declared that he intended “to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any Foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatever and particularly to the Queen of Spain of whom I am now a subject.”  

Given Betances’ furious anti-colonialism, it is easy to see how the latter part of the oath made perfect sense to him. His biographer, Ada Suárez Díaz, argues that this was “the moment of his highest admiration for the nation that has declared in its Constitution that ‘all men are created equal,’ and which had just waged a four-year war to affirm the principle of social equality.” Like many Puerto Ricans and other Latin Americans, Betances initially perceived the United States as a paragon of liberty and democracy. That view, however, would change radically a few years later.

In later years, it appears that Betances’ declaration was more a strategic move that he saw as providing him some protection against Spanish authorities. In 1868, again in exile, he invoked his U.S. citizenship declaration to seek protection against political persecution in the U.S. Consulate of Santo Domingo. He later traveled to the Dutch island of Saint Thomas, from where he directed the major revolt against Spain in Puerto Rico on September 23, 1868, known as El Grito de Lares. Although lasting only forty-eight hours, because the rebels were betrayed and had to act sooner than they had planned, Lares became the preamble for the October 1868 Grito de Yara in Cuba, which started the Ten Years War on that island. Further, Lares remained the most significant unified revolt against Spain on Puerto Rican soil. In early 1869, Betances was quickly deported from Saint Thomas to Venezuela despite his protests to the U.S. Consul, whose

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38 Suárez Díaz, El Antillano, 98.
protection he asked for as a “U.S. citizen.”

Betances was able to leave Venezuela for the United States, and arrived back in New York in April 1869, where he began to develop his transcolonial ideas of an Antillean Federation, and where his goal was to secure financial help from the U.S. government for the anti-colonial war in Cuba against Spain.

This is the key moment when Betances’ attitude toward the United States shifted radically after he realized that U.S. officials were not sincerely interested in helping the Cuban rebels because of their own imperialist agenda in the Caribbean. In 1870, during a speech in Haiti, Betances accused Britain and France of blatantly ignoring the Cuban Revolution, and blamed their inaction on the mistaken impression that the Cubans sought to annex themselves to the United States. Betances claimed that this was not only untrue, but that neither the Cubans nor the Puerto Ricans wanted annexation to the United States. Betances says:

> They have mistreated us because their words only speak of annexation and their acts only reflect their insatiable, and poorly concealed, voracity and their infernal politics, which only sow destruction of populations in pursuit of obtaining territory.

In that same speech, Betances issued the transcolonial and Calibanesque rallying cry of “The Antilles for the Antillians!” which became his anti-imperialist revision to combat what he anticipated as the inevitable rise of a U.S. empire in the region.

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40 Ibid, 162, 164, 168.

41 Quoted in Andrés Ramos Mattei, *Betances en el ciclo revolucionario antillano: 1867-1875* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1987), 137.
Years before Rizal identified his character Simoun, and was identified himself, as a *filibuster*, or a subversive, and years before Martí coined the phrase “our America” as an anti-imperialist motto, Betances had been categorized as the greatest *filibuster* of all by Spain, and had developed a transcolonial vision for the Antilles. But while Martí’s vision was transhemispheric because he sought to connect Spanish America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Betances believed that the Antilles (including French-speaking Haiti) should become a nation, a new *Gran Patria*. A committed anti-colonialist, Betances dedicated his entire life to the cause of independence and armed revolution for Puerto Rico, Cuba and Santo Domingo, and also supported and tried to arm the rebels in the Philippines. Like Rizal, Betances was a vocal anti-assimilationist who believed that the Spanish Caribbean should be de-hispanicized, or stripped of all Spanish influence.42 Also like Rizal, who suffered exile because of his words, writings, and actions, Betances had to flee Puerto Rico several times during his lifetime and was persecuted by spies, detained, deported, and continually harassed by Spanish authorities. Similar to Martí’s work, Betances’ biography and novella give us a glimpse of a Puerto Rico by the end of the nineteenth century where the U.S. presence had become significant enough that Betances used the United States to protect himself from Spain. Also, Puerto Rico was clearly a place where Spanish colonial power had become significantly more despotic and oppressive toward anyone who attempted to fight for autonomy or sovereignty.

By deploying literature for political purposes, Betances – like Martí and Rizal – knew the power of the literary word as a revolutionary weapon. In “The Virgin of Borinquen,” Betances borrowed from Poe’s style of psychological horror not only to explore his own personal torment at the tragic death of his young fiancée, but also to allegorize his nation’s oppression. This use of psychological trauma to express the consequences of colonialism is one that both Martí and Rizal will share with Betances. Over the span of thirty years, Betances’ literary style developed from that early appropriation of Poe in “The Virgin of Borinquen,” which he deployed to tell a political tale. The trajectory of translating and admiring U.S. writers is one that Martí also shared with Betances, and one which they both eventually transcended as they searched for a style that better reflected their national and regional contexts. By the time his second novella, titled “The Travels of Escaldado,” was published in 1889, Betances had developed what I describe as transcolonial satire. Like Rizal, who used satire to ridicule colonialists, both Spanish officials and friars alike, as well as complicit Filipinos, Betances deployed satirical humor as an anti-colonial literary device. Betances’ satire can be counterpoised to Mark Twain’s satirical descriptions of Hawai’i, which I discuss in Chapter 4, and which I argue served the rhetorical purposes of U.S. colonialism. Not so Betances’ humor, which was meant to singe everyone in its path, colonials and colonialists alike. More importantly, Betances’ satire can be categorized as transcolonial because it transcends the critique of only one colonial context, revealing the prevailingly imperialist, and thereby transglobal character of the world in which he lived and wrote.43

43 Carmen Lugo Filippi argues that Betances’ satire is in the European style of Erasmus, Rabelais or
Notwithstanding, Betances’ satire also is particularly national and regional because it is specifically concerned with Puerto Rico and Latin America.

“The Travels of Escaldado” was published originally in French and in France in 1889. In this novella, Escaldado (whose name in Spanish literally means “scalded”) tells “El Antillano” (or the Antillian, which was Betances’ alias as a newspaper correspondent) about his recent travels after leaving his native country of Venezuela. Escaldado, who identifies himself as hailing from “a small republic in South America,” tells how he is a direct descendant on his mother’s side of “Mr. Escarmentado,” which literally means “Mr. Learned My Lesson.” The influential and wealthy family of the Escarmentados lived in France, but they emigrated to Venezuela, and changed their name to Escaldado after Mr. Escarmentado publicly admitted to being cuckolded by his wife. When the young Escaldado reaches the age of twenty, his father, who had seen in his country, “so many civil wars, so many battles, massacres, ruinations, adventurers turned into generals, . . . generals propped up as presidents, presidents transformed into enriched and unscrupulous tyrants,” decides to send the young man on a trip to Europe. The purpose of the journey, Escaldado says, is “so I could acquire there the courteousness, the

Voltaire who “did not conform themselves to merely being ingenuous satirists but also insisted on wielding invective left and right, as able and implacable strategists, and [to this end] they deploy mordacity, irony, attacks from the side and terrible insinuations.” See Lugo Filippi, “Betances satírico” (Betances as satirist), Revista Cuadrivium 1 (1998): 35-37, http://cuhwww.upr.clu.edu/~ivelez/p35lugofilippi.html.

44 Betances, Los viajes de Scaldado [The Travels of Escaldado], Translation into Spanish by Carmen Lugo Filippi. Unpublished manuscript, Prof. Félix Ojeda Reyes, University of Puerto Rico, 2008.
moderation, and the culture that is only bestowed by the spectacle of a purified civilization”. Following his father’s wishes, Escalado promptly leaves for Paris.

As Betances sets the scene in the first few paragraphs of the story, we perceive his satirical play on names because Escarmentado, which means to learn a lesson the hard way, becomes Escalado, which means to be scalded. Thus, the immediate suggestion is that the protagonist does not benefit from a legacy of progress that goes from bad to better, but the reverse, and that his fate is to be ultimately scalded, or burned, for his actions. Further, we learn that although he comes from a republic in the New World, “three times larger than France,” as Escalado notes, it is a country racked by political unrest, corruption, and tyranny, as well as military interventions in politics. Like Martí and Rizal, who criticized the Latin American republics for their unstable political systems, Betances anticipates the same theme in this satirical short story. Like those Latin Americans whom Martí criticized in 1891 for looking toward Europe and imitating its ways, Escaldado’s father sets his son on the road back to the Old World where he is to be “civilized.” Betances deploys the opposition between savagery and civilization, casting the New World as the former, in Escalado’s father’s view, and the Old as the source of civilization that will enlighten his son.

But this is Betances writing, and nothing will be as it first appears. Escalado arrives in Paris, adopts Parisian dress (a habit of Latin American youth that Martí criticized two years later in “Our America”) and establishes himself at a grand hotel, “well disposed to admire the beauties of that noble capital city, called by a Frenchman

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45 Betances, Escalado, 7.
‘the brain of the world’.” He settles himself in his hotel, where he begins to receive visitors, mostly industrialists who want to involve him in some kind of trade or business enterprise. Among the visitors there is a journalist, whom Escaldado finds amusing, and who brings him a copy of his newspaper, “which I found full of ingenuity but no sense.”

When the journalist reads him an article about Venezuela, the narrator listens in astonishment because “the entire document was proof of such great ignorance of the issues that it addressed and was totally contrary to the truth.” Escaldado accuses the journalist of publishing falsehoods, the journalist is insulted, and Escaldado ends up challenged to a duel. While he has “never been a man of swords,” he is persuaded by his friends to “honor my nationality . . . by getting my throat cut.” Escaldado clumsily fights the duel, receiving a deep wound to his chest, which almost kills him and puts him in the hospital for three weeks, which he says “was very costly.”

Once he is out of the hospital, Escaldado walks to the Latin Quarter where he watches young students and “wise men” trying to drown a woman for “selling medals,” and then he attends an assembly in Belleville where a group of anarchists attack him after he questions their desire to end the world so they can begin it anew. Escaldado narrates how:

> All torn up and totally wounded, I ran to the hotel, closed my trunks and decided to leave for England, where I was sure that I would find, in the sanguine sons of Albion, the moderation that is proper for a Christian, Episcopal, Methodist and civilizing people.

After being attacked twice in France for pointing out the falsehoods in the press, and then for pointing out the absurdity of the anarchists’ plans, Escaldado is run out of the country

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46 Betances, Escaldado, 7, 8.
and looks toward moderate England as the true civilized nation. In either the “fourth power” or in politics, Escaldado fails to find anything to emulate or learn from in France.

Escaldado confesses, however, that he had originally thought of going from France to Germany, “but I saw the Germanic empire so prickly with sables and bayonets and so surrounded by cannons, moats and fortresses, that I feared a visit where I would only see helmets and shields everywhere.”

After getting shot at in the border between France and Germany, he decides to change course toward “free Albion,” where he arrives in London. There he also witnesses a group of people discussing “the Irish question,” which is the same colonial question Betances raises about his own native country. As he is readying himself to side with the rebels, and even before he yells: “Long Live Ireland!” Escaldado notices that his watch has been stolen. He is caught by police for supporting Ireland, and is sent to prison in Dublin, where he spends a month until the Venezuelan consul, “who heard about this, I don’t know how,” frees him. Escaldado then decides to book passage to the United States, specifically to New Orleans, “searching for refuge in the Colossus Republic, the model republic, and abandoning the model parliamentary monarchy” of England. By this point Escaldado’s travels have brought him full circle back to the New World. In the Old he witnesses intransigence, anarchism, militarism, and imperialism (in both Germany and England), and he is ready to return to a republic, like his own. But the republic to end all republics, the one that he anticipatorily describes as a Colossus, suggesting it will eventually overpower the rest by sheer force, fares no better.

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47 All quotations on this page from Betances, Escaldado, 9, 10, 11.
Upon his arrival to the United States in New Orleans, he notices a crowd gathering excitedly for some kind of happy spectacle, and he rushes along with them. But he finds himself among several hooded men, and Escaldado soon notices that,

Some held ropes and others had sticks, with which they were beating a poor black man whom they had wrested from the defendant’s chair and whom they were dragging, followed by the mob, chanting: Death! Lynch him!\textsuperscript{48}

Escaldado is told that “the criminal had the audacity of being loved by a white woman, and the people en masse were doing an act of justice by enforcing the “Lynch Law.” In a gesture “as stupid as it was instinctive,” Escaldado attempts to defend the victim, but he is immediately captured and “tied up like a black man.” His neck is noosed and he is going to be hung from the other side of the rope tied to “the unfortunate Yoyo” when another Venezuelan consul who is watching the spectacle, recognizes and saves him from the mob. “I could not avoid having the following reflection: That consuls are a good thing when they deign to occupy themselves on behalf of their fellow citizens.”\textsuperscript{49} Thus, Escaldado leaves this republic of republics, the United States, after finding out that a vitriolic racism trumps political rights in that nation. I must highlight the fact that in Betances’ story, the black man is being lynched not because he fell in love with a white woman, but because a white woman fell in love with him. In this passage, Betances (in a Calibanesque way) turns the rhetorical tables on the stereotype of the black man as dangerous to the virtue of white women by representing white women (and white U.S. society in general) as a danger to the black man, and to his allies. The fact that he calls

\textsuperscript{48} All quotations on this page from Betances, \textit{Escaldado}, 11, 12.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 12.
the black man Yoyo, which coincidently (or not) can be read as a repetition of the self-identifying “me” or “I,” is significant because the story suggests that the colonized subjectivities of the black man (despite his living in “a free country”) and of Escaldado (despite his hailing from “a free country”) are the same.\footnote{In this way, the story anticipates present-day connections between external colonialisms, and internal colonialisms, such as those experienced by African Americans, American Indians, Latin@s and other minority national, racial and ethnic groups in the United States.}

Leaving the United States, Escaldado decides to go “to a small fortunate island, a kind of earthly paradise,” where bulls do not charge people, serpents do not bite, and “where men, who have never fought for freedom, are mostly occupied in procreating.”\footnote{Betances, Escaldado, 12.} On he goes toward “the Spanish colony of Puerto Rico, a small island that is one of the Greater Antilles.” Impressed by the “beauty of the country, and the humble and sweet character of those islanders,” Escaldado goes to a café looking for some refreshment against the tropical heat. However, once in the café, he is asked whether he supports the *secos* or the *mojados* (the dry ones or the wet ones), to which he answers that “he can go either way, as long as they’re fresh.” While Escaldado believes he is being asked to choose between two kinds of cakes, he is actually being interrogated by a Spanish sympathizer who demands to know whether he is in favor of Spanish rule (the *secos*, meaning those hailing from dry Castille) or of autonomy for Puerto Ricans (the *mojados*, or those who are descended from the Spaniards who crossed the sea). He is accused of making fun of his interlocutor, grabbed by a civil guard, and taken to be tortured by Spanish military officials. Escaldado then recounts a series of horrible tortures, including being hung by his foot, near another similarly tortured man, and then both bodies being
pushed against each other. “Each clash of our two bodies would make us scream for our lives,” Escaldado says.

The tortures described by Betances are historically recorded as the *compontes*, Inquisition-like tortures instituted by Spanish authorities in 1887 against anyone in Puerto Rico suspected of being a separatist or an autonomist. Escaldado notes how,

And I, who had had no idea of the actual procedures of the Inquisition, which were only applied to the issue of Catholic faith, and which I believed to have been abolished, realized that only the reason for which these procedures were used had changed, and that if they had served until the end of the 18th century to make us agreeable to religion, they were still useful at the end of the 19th century, the century of the telephone and of the non-dirigible airships, to force us to love conservative politics.

Using the allegory of the Inquisition to describe the persecution of autonomists and *soberanistas* in Puerto Rico, Betances deploys sarcasm to compare the tortures that forced people to submit to Catholic dogma with those that forced Puerto Ricans to submit to colonial rule. Significantly, Betances also raises the fact that while the late nineteenth century symbolized modernity and progress because of new communication technologies and modes of transportation, the causes of oppression (whether religious, political, national or racial) had not changed, but had merely found different vestments with which to conceal themselves in every part of the world he visits. Finally, Escaldado escapes Puerto Rico and travels to Madrid, where he wants to register his complaints over how he

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52 For a description of the tortures, see Luis M. Díaz Soler, *Puerto Rico desde sus orígenes hasta el cese de la dominación española* (History of Puerto Rico: Origins to the End of Spanish Rule) (Río Piedras: Editorial Universidad, 1999), 642. “The three detained farm hands later said they were tied by their feet and hands, whipped and abandoned, unconscious, at a rundown warehouse . . . where they spent two or three days at the mercy of rats and vermin. [Others] told of how they were slapped in the face and were tortured with *palillos* (sticks) [wooden sticks with nails used to pressure fingers and hands together]. [A carpenter] reported that he was beaten [by a Spanish sergeant], who ordered that he be taken to a cane field and shot, an order that was not complied with.” Another person, like Escaldado, was hung from his feet.
has been treated, only to find himself escorted to the border, where he is “begged to take my complaints somewhere else.” 53 This is where Betances’ novella gets most satirical.

Defeated in his attempts to find civilization in any of the countries – empires, republics and colonies – that he has visited, Escaldado returns to his native country, to some forest land he owns. In a move that demonstrates Betances’ familiarity with U.S. culture, Escaldado decides to “renew the experiments of [Benjamin] Franklin to reach moral perfection.” Thus, Escaldado chooses twelve groups of animals, “each of which represented one of the virtues searched for by the philosopher,” and he installs them “comfortably around my house, some in gardens filled with flowers, others in cages, others in stables or prairies.” 54 Living among these animals, Escaldado is constantly reminded of the virtues hailed by Franklin in Part Two of his autobiography, which was written in Paris in 1784, but was not published until 1867. 55 Escaldado lists the virtues in the same order as Franklin has them in his autobiography, but instead of the descriptive sentences that Franklin adds to define what each virtue means, Escaldado includes the animal he sees as representing it. Escaldado’s list is as follows:

1. Temperance – the camel
2. Silence – the carp
3. Order – the beaver
4. Resolution – the hummingbird
5. Frugality – the ant
6. Industry – the ox
7. Sincerity – the dog
8. Moderation – the lamb
9. Cleanliness – the swan

53 This and the preceding quotation from Betances, Escaldado, 14.

54 Ibid, 15.

10. Tranquility – the elephant
11. Chastity – the parrot
12. Humility – the ass

The major difference between Escaldado’s and Franklin’s lists is that while Franklin enumerates thirteen virtues, Escaldado gives only twelve because he argues that Justice is a virtue “too noble to be represented by any of the beings that surrounded me.” Because he judges himself unworthy of representing that virtue, Escaldado contents himself with “inscribing in golden letters at the entrance of a small central building where family members came to me to solve some issues of litigation the word: Tolerance.” But Escaldado notes that he does not expect “that the more civilized countries will employ that virtue in all of the to-dos of human intelligence before six thousand or eight thousand years have passed.” In this tale of political development, Escaldado’s view of the future is one in which political tolerance (and thereby justice) is not to be found where empires or republics or colonies clash, but can only be forged by individuals within their own limited spheres of action. For a man who dedicated his life to political activism and revolution, the satire in this story ends with a rather disturbing conclusion that points to individualism rather than collective revolutionary action.

Escaldado fails to find the justice so praised by Franklin, the Enlightenment philosopher, in the latter’s own country of the United States. There, the nation’s evident racism (an aspect that Martí and Rizal also highlighted in their writings on the United States) fully contradicts the nation-building myths of equality and democracy of the republic. This critique is very Calibanesque in both form and content, since Escaldado

56 Betances, Escaldado, 15.
not only adopts Franklin’s paradigms, but he satirizes and re-fashions them to his own ends. Nor does Escalado find civilization in Europe, where his father has sent him to go looking for models to imitate. Instead, Escalado must (like Martí concluded in his essay) eschew all idea of mimetism, and must instead follow his own American (in the hemispheric sense) ideas of justice and civilization, including pairing the moral virtues with animals, since he cannot find any humans worthy of representing them. The political and social commentary in this very short novella is delivered through a biting transcolonial satire.

Betaces’ Calibanesque gaze is focused not only on the imperial powers of Britain, France, Germany and the United States, but also on a politically unstable Latin America, and on his own colonial Puerto Rico, where the people are more interested in “procreating” than in fighting for their freedom. The transcolonial revision of Betances’ story challenges the positivist ideals represented by Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the U.S. nation, by showing how imperialism and colonialism ultimately defeat both the hope for, and the application of, justice. The freedoms of expression and of association, which Escalado heroically strives to uphold throughout his visits to all these countries, are only possible once he returns to his own native land, but only in the space that he rules over, his own native forest. This return to the land, where Escalado can be sovereign, operates as a metaphor for Betances’ pro-independence activism on behalf of Puerto Rico and Cuba and against both Spain and the United States.

Like Martí and Rizal after him, Betances deployed a Calibanesque view in his speeches, letters, and essays to attack Spanish colonial domination in both the Caribbean
and the Pacific. But it is in his literature, specifically in one of his least studied novellas, that Betances deploys the transcolonial satire that unveils the world as a transglobal imperialist playground in which the currently or formerly colonized are relegated to the sidelines. Still, in Betances’ narrative, Escaldado chooses the sidelines for himself only after taking a Calibanesque-ly protagonist role everywhere he goes, and getting pummeled in France, almost killed in Germany, imprisoned in England, nearly lynched in the United States, tortured in Puerto Rico, and ignored in Madrid. One evident conclusion that I reach upon reading about Escaldado’s travels is that the answer he seeks is not found in the individualistic and defeatist attitude of retiring to one’s own forest, but in the collective revolution, which Escaldado does not attempt, and which enabled the successful anti-colonial revolts against Spain in both Cuba and the Philippines.

Escaldado’s story is anticipatory not only because it reveals the multiply-colonial context in which it was composed, but also, and perhaps equally important, because it anticipates Betances’ own end. Notwithstanding, while Betances died basically alone, sick, and politically defeated, his Calibanesque view presaged Martí’s and Rizal’s, and his transcolonial perspective has lost none of its subversive power as of this day.

“I know its entrails”: Martí’s transcolonial gaze

In an unfinished letter written to one of his closest friends on May 18, 1895, the day before he was killed in a skirmish with Spanish soldiers in Dos Ríos, Cuba, Martí wrote:

. . . I am in daily danger of giving my life for my country and duty, for I understand that duty and have the courage to carry it out—the duty of
preventing the United States from spreading through the Antilles as Cuba gains its independence, and from overpowering with that additional strength our lands of America. All I have done so far, and all I will do, is for this purpose. [We must with our blood close the road] annexing our American nations to the brutal and turbulent North which despises them . . . I have lived in the monster and I know its entrails; my sling is [the sling of David].

In highly dramatic and poetic language, Martí casts himself as a martyr in the anti-imperialist cause, and it is significant that he is fighting on two different colonial fronts. Not only was Martí literally fighting against Spain’s centuries-old domination of Cuba by fighting in the second war of independence, but by the time Martí wrote this letter, he also was figuratively grappling with the possibility of a U.S. imperial takeover of Cuba. By the late 1880s, when the movement to purchase Cuba from Spain resurfaced in the United States, Martí had realized that imperialism was not only an issue at the national or regional level for Cuba because of Spanish rule, but that it was also global. Like Betances and Rizal before him, Martí identified the United States as the empire waiting in the wings, poised to supplant Spain. He characterized this “North” as a brutal “giant of seven-leagues boots” that had to be stopped, as a young David had bested the giant Goliath with only his slingshot. In the passage above, Martí rhetorically deploys a biblical story, as deposed Hawaiian Queen Lili’uokalani will do only three years later (as I discuss in Chapter 4), to represent the anti-colonial struggle against the United States as a God-given duty. In this letter, his last transcolonial appeal for Cuba’s liberation, Martí argues that God is on his side.

Born in 1853 to a poor Spanish military officer and his Canary Islands wife, Martí received an education because his godfather paid for his studies at a school in Havana. Greatly influenced by *El Grito de Yara* in 1868, which set off the first war of independence in Cuba, the fifteen-year-old Martí wrote an epic anti-colonial poem that was published in a pro-independence journal. The following year, after writing a letter that accused a fellow student of being pro-Spanish, Martí was arrested and jailed. In 1870, he was tried by a military court and sentenced to six years of hard labor, but he was pardoned the following year for health reasons. To restrain him from his seditious activities, Spanish officials deported the still-teenaged Martí in 1871 to Spain, where he enrolled in the university. As Rizal would do a few years later, Martí devoted much of his time in Spain to anti-colonial activities. By the time his confinement in Spain ended in 1875, Martí had obtained a law degree and a doctorate in Philosophy and Humanities.

Because he was banned from ever returning to his native Cuba, Martí traveled to Mexico, where he spent two years working as a journalist. It is there that he first began to gain a continental reputation as a writer and thinker. Martí left Mexico when Porfirio Díaz took over as dictator, and he returned to Cuba under a pseudonym, but did not stay long. After traveling back to Mexico, and then to Guatemala, Martí married the daughter of a rich Cuban exile and in 1878 they both returned to Cuba when Spanish authorities issued an armistice after the end of the Ten Years’ War.

Rather than promoting his assimilation, his years in Spain turned Martí into even more of a separatist. By 1879, Martí was referring to Cuba as “Our Nation,” and was

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58 Biographical data in this paragraph is from Foner, *Inside*, 21 24.
advocating for independence, rather than for autonomy. When the Guerra Chiquita (The Little War) erupted that year, Martí was arrested and again deported to Spain, where he was imprisoned. After escaping from prison, Martí traveled to Paris, and then to the United States, where he settled in New York City. In 1881, when he was twenty-eight years old, Martí obtained a teaching position in Venezuela, but left shortly after he arrived because of a dispute with that country’s strongman president. The last fourteen years of his life, between 1881 and 1895, Martí lived mostly in New York City where he became a correspondent for several newspapers in Latin America, and where he also wrote for The New York Sun. Philip S. Foner, one of Martí’s most recent anthologists and biographers, argues that Martí’s work on the United States is unique since: “No one had previously had such a chance to interpret the United States to so many people in Latin America, and through [newspapers] published in the United States, to Latin Americans in this country.”59 This duality in his rhetorical purpose is part of what invests Martí’s Calibanesque interpretations of the United States with their transcolonial significance. Martí thereby becomes an anti-colonial theorist not only in the context of his direct opposition of Spanish imperialism, but also in relation to U.S. imperial extra-continental expansion.

Before he represented the United States as an imperialist threat to the entire hemisphere, however, Martí – like Betances before him – was initially “attracted, even dazzled” by U.S. democracy, as well as with “its creative power, and the opportunity it provided for every kind of individual initiative.” In 1880, upon his arrival to the United

59 Biographical information in this paragraph is from Foner, Inside, 27, 29, 30.
States, Martí wrote: “At last I am here in a country where everyone seems to be his own master.” But Martí’s experiences and his observations of life in the United States slowly and surely eroded that initial admiration. Eventually, he realized that his concept of the United States, which was shared by many in Spanish America, “was in need of revision.”

Still, this political view did not prevent him from being a vocal admirer, critic, translator and avid reader of U.S. literature. Martí wrote literary portraits of such renowned literary figures as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Louisa May Alcott, although the latter was never published. Working as a translator for the publisher Appleton and Company, Martí translated into Spanish poems by Emerson, Whitman, and Poe; translated portions of Emerson’s essays and of Alcott’s *Hospital Sketches*; and translated Helen Hunt Jackson’s novel *Ramona*, among other significant translations.

In working as a correspondent in the United States for about twenty newspapers across Latin America, Martí made it his mission to “define, notify, caution, [and] reveal the secrets of this country’s successes, which are marvelous in appearance, and in appearance only.” This transcolonial revision of the United States is what Martí accomplishes in the essay I examine in this section. While Martí’s “Our America” has been widely anthologized and has received substantial critical attention, my analysis contributes a different way of understanding the essay as a transcolonial work. This means that the essay did double duty not only by aiming its anti-colonial rhetoric

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60 This and the preceding quotation are from Foner, *Inside*, 31, 32.

61 This and the preceding quotation are from Anne Fountain, *José Martí and U.S. Writers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 23, 25.

toward U.S. imperialism, but also by identifying a different and equally insidious colonialism: that of the mind. Within the purview of my study, this essay not only best represents Martí’s Calibanesque vision, as Fernández Retamar argues, but it also reflects a transcolonial revision that debunks any pretensions that the U.S. empire, and its brand of colonialism, was any different from its European counterparts. Like Betances’ Escaldado, Martí’s transcolonial view also placed great responsibility over his Spanish American audience to refashion themselves not as poor imitations of, but against the imperialist cultures of Europe and the United States.

In “Our America,” Martí begins by setting up an opposition between regionalism and imperialism to argue that the former is no match for the latter. Martí contrasts the “prideful [Spanish American] villager” who “thinks his hometown contains the whole world” to “the giants in seven-league boots who can crush him underfoot.” By establishing this binary, Martí advocates for the revision of a mimetic political philosophy that he hoped would serve to “awaken” the “sleepy hometown in America.” The perspective of the village or of the hometown was not enough in the transglobal era of competing imperialisms in the late nineteenth century. A broader, transcolonial perspective was necessary for national and hemispheric survival. As a Calibanesque political theorist, Martí suggests that this awakening must be achieved through the “weapons of the mind, which vanquish all others.” Prophetically, Martí adds: “A vital idea set ablaze before the world at the right moment can, like the mystic banner of the last judgment, stop a fleet of battleships.”

Here, Martí’s text reveals an ambition not solely

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63 This and the preceding quotation are from José Martí, Selected Writings, 288.
to ignite ideas for the hemisphere’s benefit, but also for worldwide anti-colonial struggle, and it is precisely this global aim that contributes to Martí’s transcoloniality. In a similar vein, Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández argue that Martí’s overlapping identities as a revolutionary activist and as a transnational journalist taught him to see the struggle for Cuban independence as part of an elaborate geopolitical puzzle: the ‘national’ cultural or political event is always seen as a local inflection of a transnational phenomenon that can be read according to a hemispheric dialectic of similarity and difference.  

The transnational context in which Martí wrote and lived enabled him to anticipate the idea that the local was the global. That is why in the passage Martí writes that these “hometowns,” which have distrusted and hated one another, must “become acquainted, like men who are about to do battle.” Only a global anti-colonial effort can unite a post-colonial Spanish America to the still-colonial Spanish-speaking Antilles against both a waning Spanish Empire and a rising U.S. empire. Thus, any and all colonialisms become the enemy.

The Calibanesque theoretical framework that Martí proposes for the political development of a united Spanish America is largely a pedagogical one. Martí is ultimately concerned by the fact that American youth, in the hemispheric sense, look toward the United States and Europe as role models (like Betances’ Escaldado does), instead of developing their own pedagogical and political models. He blames the national leaders “who try to rule unique nations, of a singular and violent composition, with the laws inherited from four centuries of free practice in the United States and nineteen centuries of monarchy in France.” Martí’s concern is that the imitative tradition

64 Belnap and Fernández, José Martí, 4.
in Spanish America has occluded that region’s shared historical context, and forced it instead to model itself after the U.S. republican or European monarchical systems.

Sounding like a passage taken from Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, Martí states: “To govern well, one must attend closely to the reality of the place that is governed.”

Despite its call for close attention to national differences, Martí’s global perspective, as Susana Rotker argues, “generally ignores the marked differences among Spanish American nations and politics” so that he can re-envision the hemisphere “as a cohesive unit.”

Through this erasure of differences in Spanish America, Martí develops the political concept of a formidable nation-of-nations, this “Our America,” which is based on an “us-and-them” binary where the “Us” functions as a “site of power” to challenge the colonizing “Them,” and which refuses the category of “I-as-the-Other.” By representing the United States as an “Other” to Spanish America, Martí uniquely positions himself as the writer who gazes critically at imperial power within the empire. This position of rhetorical power is characteristic of Martí’s transcolonial writing precisely because it shatters traditional expectations of what the binaries of “powerful/powerless, center/periphery,” and colonizer/colonized represent.

Martí crafts this transcolonial revision by promoting the idea that there are essential differences between the U.S., European and Spanish American personalities, and he does so by establishing a binary between the natural and the artificial, with Spanish America representing the former. Martí argues that forms of government “must

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65 This and the preceding quotation are from Martí, *Selected Writings*, eds. Roberto González Echevarría and Ester Allen (New York: Penguin, 2002), 290.

be in harmony with the country’s natural constitution” because “government is no more
than an equilibrium among the country’s natural elements.” For Martí, these natural
elements are self-evident, and in opposition to what he calls “the imported book.” Thus,
he adds: “The battle is not between civilization and barbarity, but between false erudition
and nature.” In a Calibanesque way, Martí re-envision the opposition
civilized/barbarous into one that is better articulated as nature/nurture, in which nature is
privileged because it reveals an essential being that cannot and should not be altered by
the wrong (read: colonial or colonizing) nurturing. Martí’s narrowly gendered “natural
man,” who is by definition Spanish American, “is good, and esteems and rewards a
superior intelligence as long as that intelligence does not use his submission against him
or offend him by ignoring him.” Martí proclaims that this “natural man” cannot forgive
being ignored, “and he is prepared to use force to regain the respect of anyone who
wounds his sensibilities or harms his interests.”67 Because this natural man must in the
end prevail against tyranny, he deserves the type of government that is made to fit his
needs, not a mimetic rule that is, in itself, misbegotten and self-destructive. Although
Martí is concerned with the colonialism of the mind, his conception of a natural man
(which echoes Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Man Thinking” in the “American Scholar”
lecture I discussed in Chapter 1) is one that includes the willingness to engage in bodily
violence. In this way, Martí connects the mental and physical repercussions of colonial
rule, something Rizal will take even further in his writings.

67 All quotations in this paragraph are from Martí, Selected Writings, 290.
Martí builds his transcolonial revision through this Calibanesque opposition between the equivocal nurture that America can receive from the United States and Europe, and the hemisphere’s essential nature. His biggest concern is that the American “youth go out into the world wearing Yankee- or French-colored glasses and aspire to rule by guesswork a country they do not know.” In what can be described as a type of anti-colonial anti-intellectualism, Martí adds that: “The natural man, strong and indignant, comes and overthrows the authority that is accumulated from books because it is not administered in keeping with the manifest needs of the country.” Given that Martí has advocated “weapons of the mind” as the strongest tools of the anti-imperialist arsenal, he is not here dismissing all books, or all knowledge, but only books that promote a colonial or colonized mentality. The real need of the country, Martí continues, is to know its history “from the Incas to the present . . . in its smallest detail, even if the Greek Archons [rulers] go untaught.”

This hemispheric “American university” that Martí envisioned was one where the history of Western politics would no longer have a privileged position. Such traditional education should be supplanted by a truly American education through which its youth would learn history and politics from the moment of its indigenous beginnings.

This pedagogical re-envisioning, Martí believes, will redress the “grave blunders” that have led “the colony” to live on “in the republic.” This phrase is especially significant in transcolonial terms because Martí, the political theorist, is articulating the idea that colonialism is not only a physical or material event, but that it also has lasting

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psychological effects that remain after the colonial era has ended. Like Betances, who borrowed from Poe to express the psychological horror in his first novella about colonialism, Martí is concerned that a colonial mentality persists in the republic because of the mimetic impulse. America, Martí suggests, cannot become truly decolonized until it can cease to look toward empires for its political models. This “excessive importation of foreign ideas and formulas” means that in Spanish America “the republic [still] struggles against the colony.”

Predating twentieth-century postcolonial theorists, like Frantz Fanon and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, who have categorized the psychological vestiges of colonialism, Martí argues that despite its post-colonial status, Spanish America will never rid itself of its colonial mentality until it refashions itself on its own terms.

Martí argues that: “No Yankee or European book could furnish the key to the Hispanoamerican enigma.” This Spanish American enigma is one for Spanish America to decipher on its own.

The very title of this essay reflects Martí’s attempts to redefine America on Calibanesque terms. While many scholars have pointed to how Martí uses “Our America” to mean Spanish America (and the Spanish Caribbean) as opposed to that “Other America” of the United States, I want to focus on how Martí reclaims the hemispheric name to remind his readers that this is “Our America,” not theirs. That he does this while living in New York City, where he is aware that the United States has

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69 Martí, Selected Writings, 293.


71 Martí, Selected Writings, 294.
long appropriated the name “America” for itself, invests his rhetorical choice with transcolonial political meaning in both the U.S. and Spanish American contexts. In the former, the title becomes a challenge to imperialist appropriation, and in the second it becomes a rallying cry for anti-imperialist unification. This unifying force, Martí believes, must be achieved regardless of the limitations and “blunders” that have characterized Spanish American history. That is why Martí focuses on creation, as opposed to imitation, and stresses that creation must happen even if the ingredients for the creative process are not the same as those found in the colonizing empires. One of Martí’s most famous commands to “Make wine from plantains; it may be sour but it is our wine!” is a clear reflection of how his transcolonial revision was focused on promoting American inventiveness in all areas.

Most of “Our America” articulates Martí’s vision of how Spanish America can transcend its colonial mentality, or those internal issues that he perceives as potentially self-destructive for the hemisphere. It is only after he has identified those internal aspects of colonialism that Martí discusses an external danger to his America:

But our America may also face another danger, which comes not from within but from the differing origins, methods, and interests of the continent’s two factions. The hour is near when she will be approached by an enterprising and forceful nation that will demand intimate relations with her, though it does not know her and disdains her.72

Gendering America, the hemisphere, as feminine, Martí metaphorically represents the encounter between the “two factions” of the continent using sexual overtones, suggesting that this “demand of intimate relations” might be akin to rape. This contrasts with his

72 This and the preceding quotation are from Martí, *Selected Writings*, 294-5.
earlier gendering of the natural man as the one responsible for securing the future of America on its own terms. While the natural man has agency to change, America as woman is dependent on others for her future. To prevent being overtaken by force, America’s “urgent duty” is “to show herself as she is . . . rapidly overcoming the crushing weight of her past.” Again, while Martí identifies the United States as the aggressor, he does not cast his America as a victim. As envisioned by Martí, this America is a protagonist in this scene, and has a clear obligation: to make the male-gendered United States respect her, before he begins to covet her. Only by demonstrating that she has both physically and mentally overcome her colonial past, can America argue for her equal place next to this “giant with seven-league boots.”

Even though Martí’s transcolonial argument relies on a clear differentiation between Spanish American and U.S. identities, he cautions Americans against a xenophobic hatred of the United States. Martí states that:

> We must not, out of a villager’s antipathy, impute some lethal congenital wickedness on the continent’s light-skinned nation simply because it does not speak our language or share our view of what home life should be or resemble us in its political failings, which are different from ours… But neither should we seek to conceal the obvious facts of the problem, which can, for the peace of the centuries, be resolved by timely study and the urgent, wordless union of the continental soul.\(^{73}\)

To reject the United States because of its national, racial and cultural difference (that is, to “Other” the United States completely), is to act in the same colonialist way that Martí is theorizing against. Instead, Martí advocates a knowledgeable tolerance, one that recognizes both the limitations and assets of this neighboring “light-skinned nation,” and

\(^{73}\) This and the preceding quotation are from Martí, Selected Writings, 295.
one that works not in favor of an endless cycle of colonialism but, instead, aims to achieve a global peace. In its most poetic transcolonial moment, Martí’s essay suggests that this “continental soul” might include both his America and the United States, so that there is hope for the eventual communion of “the romantic nations of the continent and the suffering islands of the sea!” The contrast between romance and suffering is meant to highlight clearly that the nations of the American continent have achieved their sovereignty, while the islands, such as Martí’s Cuba, had not.

Martí’s transcolonial revision, as articulated in “Our America,” first addresses the internal or mental colonialism that he saw as limiting the ability of the Spanish American republics to be truly free, and then looks toward that “northern neighbor” as a potential imperialist problem. This dual vision was enabled by the fact that Martí was fighting imperialism on at least two fronts, and realized that “in order to win political independence for the patria, not only did they have to defeat Spanish forces but also to keep the United States firmly at bay.” Spanish America was able to “save itself” from the tyranny of Spain, Martí wrote in another of his U.S. dispatches, and given U.S. imperialist desire for the hemisphere, the moment had come for it “to declare its second independence.” This transcolonial vision, one that saw beyond actual colonial possession to the effects of colonialism and its psychological and philosophical ramifications, was enabled by the historical context in which Martí lived and wrote.

Anne Fountain notes that “the Cuba that formed José Martí’s life was framed by Cuban

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74 Martí, Selected Writings, 296.

desire for freedom from Spain, fear of U.S. imperialism toward Cuba, and the continuing tragedy of [colonial] slavery,” and that his writings about the United States made him “a transnational figure who continues to link the Americas.”\textsuperscript{76} Martí’s transcolonial gaze, one that he trained both internally toward Spanish America, and externally toward the United States, made him one of the most significant theorists of a uniquely transglobal time of empire. Martí’s ideals of continental unification, although they remain unfulfilled, continue to have as much currency today as they did then.

\textbf{Transcolonial politics in Rizal’s “The Philippines: A Century Hence”}

On December 30, 1896, after being tried for sedition and treason by a Spanish military court in the Philippines, Rizal was executed by a firing squad in front of a large crowd of spectators. His body was not returned to his family, but instead was buried in a secret place to prevent Filipinos from turning his tomb into a peregrination shrine. While Rizal’s death instantly made him a national martyr, fanning rather than dousing the flames of Filipino insurrection against Spain, Rizal had actually disavowed the 1896 armed rebellion he was accused of masterminding only weeks before he was killed. In what he hoped would be a public manifesto, but which was repressed by Spanish authorities, Rizal argued that while he had “given proofs” of his desire for his country’s freedom, he also “held as the necessary [prerequisite] the education of the people, so that by means of instruction and work, they would hold on to their own [identity] and make

\textsuperscript{76} Fountain, \textit{U.S. Writers}, 2, 20.
themselves worthy of those liberties.” Having cast himself throughout his life as a “political teacher,” Rizal condemned the insurrection as “absurd” and “savage,” criticized it for being “plotted behind my back,” and stated that it “dishonors Filipinos and discredits those who could be our advocates.” Reading between the lines, Spanish officials paraphrased Rizal’s last political text as basically meaning something like, “Faced with failure, countrymen, lay down your arms; later on, I will lead you to the Promised Land.” Although Rizal never fired a shot at a Spaniard in defense of his nation, the colonial authorities in the Philippines considered him to be as dangerous as (or perhaps more so than) if he were armed.

After dedicating his life to the cause of anti-colonial struggle in the Philippines, Rizal was handed his death warrant a few days before his execution. When he noticed that the document described him as “Chinese,” Rizal crossed out that word and replaced that description not with the nationality filipino, but with the racial/ethnic adjective indio (indigenous). That the man whose first novel, Noli me tangere (1887), earned him the status of “First Filipino” and “Father of the Country,” chose to highlight his indigenous ancestry over his nationality strikes me as particularly revealing. Also important is the

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77 All biographical information in this paragraph is from Anderson, Under Three Flags, 162-4.

78 Ibid, 163.

79 El filibusterismo is a sequel to the Noli, in which the protagonist, Crisostomo Ibarra, returns to the Philippines after spending seven years abroad, studying in Europe. Upon his return, Ibarra finds that his reformist ideas clash against the repressive dual rule of the friars and the Spanish authorities. He also finds out not only that his father, Don Rafael, has died and that his body has been exhumed from the Catholic cemetery by orders of Padre Dámaso. Ibarra attacks the friar, and is later falsely implicated in a revolt, which forces him to flee, along with Elias, his revolutionary double. Both are chased by Spanish officials and one of them is killed. María Clara, Ibarra’s beloved, enters a nunnery and eventually goes mad with grief upon learning of Ibarra’s presumed death. In the sequel, Ibarra returns thirteen years later to the Philippines, transformed into Simoun, a rich jeweler from Cuba, who is the confidante of the Philippine’s
fact that Rizal sought to separate himself from the most significant anti-colonial rebellion in Philippine history until that moment, after the 1872 mutiny at Cavite. In his writings, Rizal acknowledged the 1872 revolt as foundational to his own development as a nationalist, noting how without that event he likely would have become a Jesuit and instead of writing his first anti-colonial novel, commonly known as the *Noli*, he would have “written its opposite.” Rizal thus identified armed revolt as the turning point in his own political development, proposing that if the Cavite revolt had not happened, he not only would have joined one of the Catholic orders he opposed throughout his life, but also would have been an anti-nationalist. This conflicted sympathy for armed revolt, which is evident in the writings I examined, suggests that the conventional representation of Rizal as a pacifist reformer ignores the strong subtext of violence in his work. The contrast between the revolutionary actions of the protagonist of his last novel, *El filibusterismo*, published in Belgium in 1891, and Rizal’s manifesto of 1896 appears striking, unless one reads between the lines, as the Spanish authorities did.

Rizal seems not to have directly engaged in armed revolution himself (unlike Martí and Betances), but like his Antillian counterparts, Rizal was aware that words are

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80 Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 58. In the Cavite mutiny, seven Spanish officers were killed, and Spanish officials retaliated by arresting hundreds of Filipino creoles and mestizos, most of whom were eventually deported to other Spanish colonies. The Spanish regime chose to make a public statement and three Filipino liberal, secular priests, identified as the leaders of the revolt—the creoles José Burgos and Jacinto Zamora, and the Chinese mestizo Mariano Gómez—were garroted in front of forty thousand spectators. In 1891, he dedicated his second novel to the garroted priests.
weapons, and that texts can ignite the most revolutionary of flames. While many scholars have described Rizal’s relationship to armed struggle as “ambivalent” or “ambiguous,” I believe the more correct adjective is “conflicted.” Rather than ambivalence or ambiguity, what I perceive in Rizal’s work is a conflict between his understanding of the costs of armed revolution, and his intimate conviction that it might be inevitable. While scholars have focused on Rizal’s cautious, reform-oriented side, the essay I examine below, as well as his last novel, acknowledge armed rebellion as perhaps the only remaining anti-colonial measure left for the Philippines. In El filibusterismo, the protagonist Simoun, whose nationality is initially indeterminate (since the other characters do not immediately recognize him as Ibarra, the hero of the Noli), effectively functions as a transcolonial character. Simoun is alternatively described as an “American mulatto,” a “British Indian,” or an “American,” all of which are racialized and colonized identities. Simoun, who characterizes himself as an “indio,” eerily anticipates the way Rizal came to represent himself as he corrected his death warrant. By the time he was executed by the Spaniards, Rizal appears to have articulated the transcolonial nature of race and ethnicity over nationalism. While both race and ethnic background are categories included in definitions of nationality, they also transcend the nation.

Compared to his more famous Noli, which was published in Germany, Rizal’s final novel has received less critical attention in the United States. Also unlike his first

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81 See Epifanio San Juan, Jr., Rizal in Our Time: Essays in Interpretation (Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil, 1997), vii. Miguel de Unamuno, the Spanish philosopher, described Rizal as the Filipino Hamlet, constantly pivoting “between fear and hope, between faith and despair.”

82 Rizal, El filibusterismo, 8. Simoun is also connected to “Yankee” business plans. “American” in the novel is used for Latin Americans, while “Yankee” for U.S. Americans.
novel, which he wrote with audiences in both Europe and the Philippines in mind, the *Fili*
(as it is also commonly referred to by Rizal scholars) was primarily meant for Filipinos.\(^83\) Benedict Anderson argues that the *Fili* is “proleptic fiction, set in a time as yet to come—although no Filipino would write the future like this for more than a century.”\(^84\) Rizal’s final novel anticipates not only the Philippine revolution, but also the discursive clash that would occur between Filipinos and the United States once the Philippines became a U.S. colony. The novel’s title raises interesting questions about Rizal’s rhetorical purpose, and points to the doubly anticipatory nature of the novel. The word *filibustero*, epistemologically rooted in the Dutch language, was originally used to identify a buccaneer or pirate, but later the word took on a more political meaning through its association with the buccaneer’s love of liberty and code of honor. In the U.S. context, meanwhile, the word was used to describe the mercenaries who between 1848 and 1850 attempted to invade Cuba with the goal of annexing it to the United States.\(^85\)

Explaining his word choice to a German friend, Rizal said the word *filibustero* was “little known in the Philippines,” but that he had first heard it in 1872 when the rebellious priests were executed. “I still remember the terror [the word] aroused,” Rizal told his friend. “Our father forbade us ever to utter it . . . (It means) a dangerous patriot

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\(^84\) Ibid, 31.
\(^85\) Ibid, 59. See also Lazo, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States*, 5, 6. Lazo points to how before the word became common usage in describing a U.S. Senate legislative maneuver, it was used to describe expansionist expeditions that set out from the United States to Mexico, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. Lazo points out that Latin Americanists have defined filibusters “as an Anglo-American invader of Latin America,” while exiled Cubans in the nineteenth century defined *filibustero* as “a symbol of [their] determination to oust Spain from the island.”
who will soon be hanged . . .”\textsuperscript{86} For Rizal, then, the word had clear anti-colonial connotations that concomitantly raised the specter of colonial repression and violence. Little did Rizal know as he uttered those words that he himself would be executed basically for being a \textit{filibuster} against Spain. Neither would Rizal expect the word to have a double meaning in which it also functioned as an adjective to describe the imperialist mid-nineteenth century U.S. incursions into Cuba and later into Latin America. The word, whose meaning is now mostly associated with its U.S. imperialist usage, is chosen by Rizal to describe his tormented protagonist, Simoun. Because, to a contemporary reader who does not know Rizal’s work, the title \textit{El filibusterismo} unintentionally suggests a reference to U.S. imperialism, the novel’s proleptic role is particularly intriguing.

In a literary anticipation of the Philippine Revolution, Rizal’s protagonist, Simoun, unveils his plot to Basilio, a young Filipino, stating that he has enough nitroglycerine to raze the colonial society in the Philippines. But for Simoun, his weapon of choice is more than a means to causing mass destruction, it is the symbol of the “final argument” against colonialism. Simoun states:

\begin{quote}
It is somewhat more than nitroglycerine! It is concentrated tears, repressed hatred, injustice and wrongs. It is the final argument of the weak, force against force, violence against violence...\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}

Basing his argument on the psychological toll of colonialism, Simoun articulates this “final argument” as being inevitable, destructive violence, the same concern that Rizal

\textsuperscript{86} Anderson, \textit{Under Three Flags}, 59.

\textsuperscript{87} Rizal, \textit{El filibusterismo}, 273.
will express in the essay I discuss below, and the same concern about the consequences of colonialism, which postcolonial writers articulated in the twentieth century. When his compatriot asks him about how the world will react to “such butchery,” Simoun gives a transcolonial response that highlights how empires have previously dealt with their colonized populations. Simoun states:

>The world will applaud as usual, conceding the right to the strongest, to the most violent! . . . Europe applauded when the nations of the West sacrificed in American millions of Indians, and certainly not to establish nations much more moral or more peaceful. There is the North with its egotistic liberty, its Law of Lynch, its political deceptions; there is the South with its restless republics, its barbarous revolutions, civil wars, military revolutions as in its Mother Spain. Europe applauded . . . when England destroyed in the Pacific the primitive races to make room for its emigrants.88

Similar to the point that Betances makes through his transcolonial satire in Escaldado, Simoun notes the genocide of indigenous peoples by Europeans, the individualistic democracy of the United States and its openly racist policies, the political upheavals in Latin America, and British imperialism as the global, historical context that legitimizes his destructive response to colonialism in the Philippines. Simoun’s belief that violence is the only effective response by the colonizer against colonialism is one that while Rizal may not have espoused publicly as his own (after all, Simoun does die, defeated, at the end of the Fili) does suggest that Rizal grappled with this belief himself.

Though fictive, the angry, bitter Simoun appears to stand in for Rizal, or at least for one aspect of Rizal, the side that gave repeated evidence that he was, indeed, a filibustero. Born in 1861, Rizal left the Philippines at age twenty in 1882 to study in

88 Rizal, El filibusterismo, 276.
Spain, where he obtained a doctorate in philosophy in 1885. Rizal could have completed another doctorate in medicine but he was prevented from doing so because he ran out of funds.89 Arriving in Madrid, Rizal was dismayed to find that the Spaniards called him Chinese, Japanese, and americano, meaning Latin American, but never Filipino. “Poor country!” Rizal wrote in a letter to his family, “Nobody has news of you!” Because of the racial hierarchy in the Philippines, the word filipino was used there to describe only the white criollos. But Rizal and his compatriots soon discovered that in Spain those racial categories were inapplicable. Regardless of race or ethnicity, all those who came from the Philippines were grouped together by the Spaniards as filipinos.

Anderson argues that the change of context created a sharp contrast between what the young Filipino students identified themselves as in the colonized context – criollos, mestizos, Malays, Chinese – and the identity that they were forced into within the colonial metropolis. This change, from the colonized to the colonial context, showed Rizal how national categories tend to occlude racial and ethnic differences within national groups. Because Rizal’s nationalist awakening occurred in Spain, Anderson suggests that “Filipino nationalism really had its locational origins in urban Spain rather than in the Philippines.”90 There is no doubt that living in Spain became a turning point for Rizal, as it was for Martí, and as living in France was for Betances. This experience gave all of them the perspective that enabled them to articulate the frameworks of their respective nationalist struggles. But I disagree with Anderson’s premise, which

89 Anderson, Under Three Flags, 60, 64.
90 Ibid, 63, 64.
privileges the colonial metropolis over the colonized space. Rizal’s incorporation of Philippine history into his novels, and especially the essay I discuss below, demonstrates that Filipino nationalism was percolating well before Rizal articulated it while studying in Spain.

Rizal’s studies abroad in the colonial metropolis were not the only factor in his development as an anti-colonial filibustero. The twinning of his family’s history with the nation’s history had a direct causal effect on Rizal’s development as an anti-imperialist. Rizal’s family, the most prosperous in their town of Calamba (about thirty miles south of Manila), was well educated, spoke both Spanish and Tagalog, and was of mixed Malay, Spanish, and Chinese ancestry. Because the family rented most of their land from the Dominican order, their wealth was directly dependent on the unusual power of the friars in the Philippines. By the time Rizal returned to the Philippines in 1887, like Ibarra does in the Noli, his first novel was widely known as a text that strongly criticized the immoral and repressive actions of friars. Anderson describes Rizal’s Noli as “the first incendiary anticolonial novel written by a colonial subject outside Europe.”

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91 Anderson, Under Three Flags, 60.

92 Ibid, 86, 87. “The Orders,” as these Catholic organizations are jointly referred to, basically controlled the land and the economic development of the Philippines, establishing themselves on equal footing as the military authorities. The power that the religious orders wielded in the Philippines, established under the reign of Philip II of Spain in the sixteenth century, distinguished Spanish rule in that archipelago from how they rule its sister colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Mostly comprised of Dominicans and Augustinians, “friar power was as peculiar to the Philippines as slavery was to Cuba. But slavery was finally abolished in 1886, while in Manila friar power was not seriously undermined till the collapse of the whole system in 1898.”

93 Ibid, 6, 165. Anderson argues that in El filibusterismo Rizal had imagined “the political collapse of [his] society and the near-elimination of its ruling powers. Perhaps no Filipino had even dreamed of such a possibility till then, let alone entered the dream into the public domain.”

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the novel’s clear stance against the Catholic friars who controlled the Philippines, the Catholic orders and the Archbishop of Manila “demanded that the book be prohibited as heretical, subversive, and slanderous.” While the Noli was not banned by the Spanish authorities, Rizal very quickly became persona non grata in his country. After the orders significantly raised rents on their lands between 1883 and 1886, by the time Rizal returned to the Philippines many tenants, including his relatives, had stopped paying rent. When the friars chose to take the non-paying tenants to court, Rizal’s family was not only targeted but some of them also were evicted. Meanwhile, Rizal was advised to leave the Philippines because he was “suspected of masterminding the [anti-colonial] resistance.”

That was why in February 1888, Rizal left for England, stopping first in Japan and then briefly in the United States. Anderson argues that Rizal “was becoming a filibustero, a patriot determined one way or another on his country’s full independence.” In exile once more, Rizal published a series of journalistic essays in a republican newspaper in Spain, including the essay titled “The Philippines: A Century Hence,” (1889-1890), as well as his second and last novel, El filibusterismo.

The transcolonial perspective evident in El filibusterismo is presaged by Rizal’s essay, which also predicts the Filipino Revolution, and anticipates the rise of the United States as an empire in the Pacific. Epifanio San Juan, Jr., argues that the essay “may be considered Rizal’s masterpiece of materialist dialectics in action” because the text

94 Anderson, Under Three Flags, 92, 93.

95 Ibid, 96.

96 Ibid, 128-9. Rizal returned to the Philippines in 1892, after a short stay in British-controlled Hong Kong, and created the first legal political organization for Filipinos in the Philippines, the Liga Filipina.
extrapolates the future by juxtaposing the Philippines’ historical past and the present. Rizal begins the essay by issuing the maxim: “In order to read the destiny of people, it is necessary to open the book of its past.” Setting himself up as a soothsayer, one who can read the unknown fate of his people, Rizal reminds his readers that history must first be consulted. Rizal begins that historical narrative at the moment of colonization by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, when the Philippines’ attachment “to the Spanish crow” resulted in their depopulation, impoverishment, and in their stagnated historical development. The Filipinos were “caught in their metamorphosis, without confidence in their past, without faith in their present and with no fond hope for the years to come.”

The change that the Spaniards catalyzed in the Filipinos was that of a colonial subject, which marked “a new era for the Filipinos,” in which they “gradually lost their writings, their songs, their poetry, their laws in order to learn by heart other doctrines.” As Betances did in his first novella and Martí would do in his essay, Rizal here anticipates the study of colonial psychology by connecting the act of colonial assimilation to the destruction of native culture.

Rizal not only describes the costs of assimilation in terms of how it affects the culture of the colonized, but he also identifies the psychological harm of colonialism to the colonized. The Filipinos, Rizal continues, were then “lowered in their own eyes, they became ashamed of what was distinctively their own, in order to admire and praise what was foreign and incomprehensible; their spirit was broken and they acquiesced.”

97 San Juan, Jr., Rizal in Our Time, 72.

98 This and the preceding quotation are from José Rizal, “The Philippines a Century Hence,” in Honorato Fortú, ed., Rizal (Manila: José Rizal National Centennial Commission, 1961), 89.
thus connects mental colonization with physical colonization as two inseparable components of the same imperialist effort, and he argues that Spain was not contented with this level of domination. Once the Filipinos “had become disheartened and disgusted with themselves,” the colonial rulers sought to: “add the final stroke for reducing so many dormant wills and intellects to nothingness, in order to make of the individual a sort of toiler, a brute, a beast of burden and to develop a race without mind or heart.” Having identified the transcolonial *modus operandi* of colonialism – the degradation of the colonized for exploitation – Rizal also identifies the dialectical relationship between oppression and resistance. The “native,” as Rizal identifies the Filipinos, “began to study himself and to realize his misfortune,” and notes how such anti-colonial self-awakening was unexpected by his “despotic masters.” The “flame” that was ignited in “a few hearts” was “nevertheless . . . surely and consumingly propagated,” and: “Thus when a flame catches a garment, fear and confusion propagate it more and more, and each shake, each blow, is a blast from the bellows to fan it into life.” By theorizing on what he saw as the inevitable result of colonial oppression – anti-colonial resistance – Rizal turns his essay into a transcolonial reflection on colonialism. Because this theorizing is not European, but Filipino, and is born from and against the colonial context itself, Rizal’s political treatise on colonialism clearly represents the Calibanesque.

Once he describes the manner in which anti-colonial resistance erupts, through the self-awakening of the colonized, Rizal moves on to the second part of the essay. He begins this section by asking the question that guides the development of his argument: “What will become of the Philippines within a century? Will they continue to be a
Spanish colony?” To answer his question, Rizal first sets up a Calibanesque contrast between how the Spaniards, the friars and the Filipinos perceive their condition at the end of the nineteenth century. Rizal writes that:

For the liberal Spaniards the ethical condition of the people remains the same, that is, the native Filipinos have not advanced; for the friars and their followers, the people have been redeemed from savagery, that is, they have progressed; for many Filipinos ethics, spirit, and customs have decayed, as decay all the good qualities of a people that falls into slavery that is, they have retrograded.\(^99\)

Rizal argues that not even the most progressive Spaniards can perceive advancement among the Filipinos, while the friars only care that the natives have been civilized. But for the Filipinos, the quality of their cultural and political life has been degraded because they are colonial slaves to their colonial masters. The connection that Rizal makes between colonialism and slavery (which we also saw in Mary Peabody’s novel discussed in Chapter 2) is significant in building his transcolonial argument. Slavery and colonialism, Rizal suggests, are inseparable, and while they will always result in the degradation of the colonized, the colonizer will only perceive his or her actions as progress.

Because colonialism is slavery, in that its very foundational rationalization cannot allow for true reforms or equality, Rizal raises the specter of insurrection as the inevitable result of this situation in the Philippines. Drawing from mechanical metaphors, Rizal writes: “The batteries are gradually becoming charged and if the prudence of the government does not provide an outlet for the currents that are accumulating, some day the spark will be generated.” Rizal describes such a conflict as “deplorable,” and states

\(^99\) All quotations are from Rizal, “The Philippines,” 90, 91, 92, 93.
that “the government” would have all advantages to succeed, this “would be a Pyrrhic victory, and no government should desire such.” By fomenting armed rebellion among its colonial subjects, Rizal suggests, the colonizer is sowing the seeds of its own destruction. Rizal eventually concludes that: “The Philippines, then, will remain under Spanish domination, but with more law and greater liberty, or they will declare themselves independent after steeping themselves and the mother country in blood.”

Only political reforms can keep the spark of revolution from igniting, Rizal argues. If Spain fails to act for its own benefit, then the highest of prices will be paid with the blood of both sides. In this, Rizal could not have been more prescient.

In the third section of his essay, Rizal discusses the advantages of political reforms as ways to diffuse the threat of revolution. As Martí would do, Rizal sounds very Machiavellian, in the sense of providing a handbook on the effects of colonialism, when he states that history must be consulted before determining whether reforms, such as freedom of the press and political representation, ultimately function in the colonizer’s benefit. Rizal writes: “Uprisings and revolutions have always occurred in countries tyrannized over, in countries where human thought and the human heart have been forced to remain silent.” If Machiavelli wrote his famous *The Prince* to caution state leaders about the ways to remain in power during his time and beyond (Napoleon famously used the book as a primer), Rizal’s essay also functions as a highly detailed manual on how colonialism cannot work. The only way Rizal saw the Philippines as remaining a Spanish colony was: “if [the Filipinos] enter upon the life of law and civilization, if the

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100 All quotations are from Rizal, “The Philippines,” 97, 102.
rights of their inhabitants are respected, if the other rights due them are granted, if the
liberal policy of the government is carried out without trickery or meanness, without
subterfuges or false interpretations.”101 The subtext of the essay, however, suggests
Rizal’s conviction that colonial powers cannot give what they do not have to give (as
Betances himself articulated about Spain). Rizal, like Betances and Martí, believed that
colonialism, like slavery, is predicated upon an asymmetrical relation of power that can
only be sustained through physical and psychological violence. To this day, history
shows them all to be right on that point.

Rizal then reaches the transcolonial zenith of his essay when he discusses the
“inexorable laws of history,” which will take over if Spain continues to exploit the
Philippines, “killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.” This is when Rizal highlights
the spatial relationships that characterize transcolonialism by noting that as European
political thinkers had argued: “Colonies established to subserve the policy and the
commerce of the sovereign country, all eventually become independent.” Before these
Europeans had said so, however, “all the Phoenician, Carthaginian, Greek, Roman,
English, Portuguese, and Spanish colonies had said it.” With this argument, that history
“does not record in its annals any lasting domination exercised by one people over
another, of different races, of different usages and customs, of opposite and divergent
ideals,” Rizal moves on to the final section of his essay. This is where Rizal predicts that
if Spain did not attend to the colonial situation in the Philippines, it would “risk not only
her other possessions and her future in Africa, but also her very independence in Europe.”

101 All quotations are from Rizal, “The Philippines,” 104, 111.
As Queen Lili‘uokalani would do only a few years later to defend the sovereignty of Hawai‘i from the United States, Rizal warns Spain that it had set itself on a course of self-destruction not only as an empire, but also as a nation in itself.

In the final part of his treatise on colonialism, Rizal again widens his transcolonial lens to consider the future of the world, of empires and colonies alike. That is when he distinguishes the Filipinos from “the small [Latin] American republics,” which he says “achieved their independence easily and their inhabitants are animated by a different spirit from what the Filipinos are.”

Upon decolonization, the Philippines will be “more prudent” than these republics because they recognize “the danger of falling again into other hands, English or German.” Rizal thus articulates a transcolonial subjectivity very much aware, like Betances and Martí, that imperialism was not only the purview of Spain. And also like Betances and Martí, this consciousness leads Rizal to wonder whether “the great American Republic, whose interest lies in the Pacific and who has no hand in the spoliation of Africa may some day dream of foreign possessions.” “This is not impossible,” Rizal continues, “for the example is contagious,” but he notes that “this is contrary to her traditions.” The disease of imperialism as contrary to U.S. republican values is an idea that Queen Lili‘uokalani also will advance in 1898 within the context of the actual rise of a U.S. empire in the Pacific.

Although Rizal contemplated the possibility of U.S. imperialism, he was unconvinced that the United States would become an imperial power in his region.

102 All quotations are from Rizal, “The Philippines,” 111, 112, 116, 117.
believing that the European powers “would not allow her to proceed.”

For San Juan, Jr., this statement proves that either Rizal was “ignorant” or chose to ignore recent events in the United States, including

the Civil War, the failure of Reconstruction, the rise of white supremacy and violence against people of color—a continuation of the genocide of the Indians, enslavement of the Africans, and the subjugation of the Mexicans.

While we do not know how familiar Rizal was with the intra-continental colonial history of the United States, his solution to U.S. imperialism nonetheless reflected a transcolonial subjectivity: he firmly believed that other existing empires would be an obstacle for the upstart nation. Betances also expressed surprise and disappointment, as I discussed before, that England and France had not intervened to prevent U.S. intervention in Cuba. Within the transglobal, imperialist context in which both men lived and wrote, it was not unlikely but actually expected that the United States would not go unchallenged by its older rivals. In this, both men were wrong only about timing and imperial protagonist, since that challenge did come in the twentieth century, but from another new-fangled empire – Japan.

Rizal’s anticipatory essay, which painstakingly catalogues the colonial aspirations and status of every imperial power and aspiring power of his time, is an intriguing argument that proves its point by its negation. Because the essay details the ways in which Spain has not and cannot prevent the Filipinos from rising in armed revolution against colonial rule, I argue that the essay shows us Rizal’s conflict between his desire

103 The three previous quotations are from Rizal, “The Philippines,” 119.

104 San Juan, Jr., Rizal in Our Time, 76.
for bloodless democratic reform, and his realization that, ultimately, democracy is impossible in a colonial context. San Juan, Jr., argues that: “By the ruse of a self-deconstructing procedure, Rizal exposes the deadly contradictions, the paradox and irony, integral to a reformist conscience that dare claim history and truth on its side. What the text dramatizes is the self-negation of reformism and the assimilationist wish.”\textsuperscript{105} Similar to the way his final novel would operate, Rizal’s proleptic essay reveals the transcolonial conflict between reform and revolution, which Betances and Martí resolved in a different way. However, while Rizal in his writings did not ultimately advocate for armed revolt, his writings served as the spark that ignited the flame, and his execution as the “blast from the bellows” that ignited the Filipino Revolution against Spain, and also the subsequent war of the Filipinos against the United States.

\textbf{Transcolonial Calibans}

The transglobal world to which these three Calibanesque writers contributed not only their anti-colonial writings, but also their lives, connected Puerto Rico to Cuba to the Philippines, and these in turn to Latin America and Hawai‘i. By 1895, the War of Independence in Cuba was having clear repercussions both in Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and the Filipinos followed the lead with their own revolution only eighteen months later. Also that year, a radical Spanish newspaper commented prophetically, if sarcastically, that simultaneous wars in Cuba and the Philippines would lead the Spanish government to “write on the ruins of the Spanish nation the historic epitaph Finis

\textsuperscript{105} San Juan, Jr., \textit{Rizal in Our Time}, 84.
Ironically, while Spain hoped that Rizal’s death would function as a warning to Cuba, and to the rest of its colonies, Rizal’s analysis on the non-future of colonialism between “different races” bore out. Spain eventually lost all of its Pacific and American possessions three years after Rizal was executed. Also ironically, however, the *Finis Hispanae* was due not only to the anti-colonial revolts in Cuba and the Philippines, and to people who, like Betances, made the fall of the Spanish empire their life’s mission. The end of one era of colonialism in both the Pacific and the Americas was paved by, and gave way to, another era of colonialism and anti-colonial struggle with the rise of the U.S. empire.

As I have shown, that the three men I have studied anticipated that moment is not surprising, given their historical and geopolitical contexts. But that they did so at the same time that they proposed Calibanesque frameworks that transcended their colonial contexts is particularly significant. These anti-colonial theorists anticipated not only U.S. imperialism, but by edging beyond the reactive toward the pro-active mode and theorizing about their transcolonial condition, they anticipated many of the ways in which we understand colonial and postcolonial subjectivities in our field today. While Benedict Anderson claims that Rizal “was a novelist and moralist not a political thinker,” my reading of his seminal essay shows how Rizal’s theorizations about colonialism, in its psychological and political dimensions, clearly establish him as a significant transcolonial theorist both in his time and today. Like Rizal, Martí’s work also demonstrates a transcolonial subjectivity that expands the ways in which he is currently

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studied by showing how his ideas, and the structure of his argument, anticipates twentieth-century forms of postcolonial analysis. Finally, Betances’ work must be translated into English, rescued from its critical oblivion and studied, along with that of Rizal and Martí, as another transcolonial Caliban who challenged the dominant ideologies of Prospero, both in the Spanish and U.S. contexts. Further, because Puerto Rico continues to be a U.S. colony today, Betances’ anti-colonial works have lost none of their significance and timeliness.

In the same year that the United States took over Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and Hawai‘i, deposed Queen Lili‘uokalani published her autobiography, *Hawai‘i’s History by Hawai‘i’s Queen*. Although there is no evidence that Lili‘uokalani was aware of Rizal, or of Betances and Martí, her work also can be added to the works I identify as transcolonial revisions. In her case, Lili‘uokalani utilized what I describe as indigenized translation, a transcolonial form that combined European and indigenous discourses to argue for her nation’s sovereignty, and against U.S. imperialism. In Chapter 4, the final chapter of my dissertation, I analyze Lili‘uokalani’s text by counterpoising it against the colonial translations of Mark Twain, and other dominant colonial representations of Hawai‘i in the late nineteenth century.
CHAPTER 4

TRANSLATING HAWAI‘I:

QUEEN LILI‘UOKALANI’S COUNTERPOINT TO MARK TWAIN

The [Hawaiian] king and the chiefs ruled the common herd with an iron rod; made them gather all the provisions the masters needed; build all the houses and the temples; stand all the expenses of whatever kind; take kicks and cuffs for thanks; drag out lives well flavored with misery, and then suffer death for trifling offenses or yield up their lives on the sacrificial altars to purchase favors from the gods for their hard rulers.

Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, 1872¹

I have always said that under our own system in former days there was always plenty for prince or for people. The latter were not paid in money, nor were they taxed in purse. The chief, by the overseer he appointed, took proper care of their needs, and they in turn contributed to the support of his table. It was a repetition of the principle of family life by extending the same over a large number of retainers.

Queen Lili‘uokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawai‘i’s Queen*, 1898²

These passages by Mark Twain and Hawaiian Queen Lili‘uokalani articulate the sharply different representations of Hawai‘i in the late nineteenth century that I consider


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in this chapter.\(^3\) Within a transcolonial framework, the act of translation becomes not only a necessity, but also a key rhetorical weapon given that different languages, cultures, and entire worldviews must be translated from and into each other within spaces where the forces of empire and colonialism prevail. Although the act of translation might always have the same goal – to achieve some degree of communication and understanding—translators do not share the same purpose, even in similar contexts. In his writings about Hawai‘i, Twain, who visited the islands for four months in 1866, represented the native monarchy as tyrannical and feudal and the natives as exploited serfs. By further rendering the Native Hawaiians as chattel slaves, or “the common herd,” and the kings and chiefs as “masters,” Twain translated the Hawaiian kingdom into negative terms easily understandable for his U.S. audience. In counterpoint, Queen Lili‘uokalani represented the monarchical government as a reciprocal system through which the king cared for his retainers in exchange for “the support of [the king’s] table,” as an extension of the familial ties among the Hawaiians. For Lili‘uokalani, the constitutional monarchy symbolized the last stand for the national sovereignty of Hawai‘i, which ended in 1898 upon the annexation of the islands to the United States. The juxtaposition of Twain’s and Lili‘uokalani’s divergent and contemporaneous renderings reveals the ways in which each translated Hawai‘i for specific political and ideological purposes during a shared transcolonial context. Twain’s translations, aimed at promoting annexation, and Lili‘uokalani’s translations, with their clear anti-imperialist

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\(^3\) Kānaka Maoli is the Hawaiian term used to represent “a Native person, a Hawaiian by ancestry.” See Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo’ole Osorio, *Dismembering Laui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 290. In this chapter, I follow the usage of Queen Lili‘uokalani, who refers to her people as Hawaiians.
purpose, anticipated colonial and anti-colonial representations of Hawai‘i as the U.S.
empire emerged in the Pacific. Similar to Betances, Martí, and Rizal, both Twain and
Lili‘uokalani wrote against the backdrop of tussling empires, specifically as the British
Empire began to wane and the U.S. empire arose.

When Twain arrived in Hawai‘i in January 1866, the Hawaiian Islands had been
ruled under a constitutional monarchy for twenty-six years after Kamehameha III enacted
the first constitution in 1840. The islands were united under one ruler in 1796 by
Kamehameha I almost two decades after Captain James Cook named them “The
Sandwich Islands” in 1778. By the 1860s, the descendants of the New England
missionaries who had arrived forty years earlier had made significant political and
economic inroads into Hawaiian society and had attained substantial power. Honolulu
was a bustling and culturally vibrant city where both Native Hawaiian and Euroamerican
influences were in evidence. Also at this time, the long-Christianized native population
was experiencing a dramatic drop in numbers, plummeting from seventy thousand to
fifty-seven thousand between 1853 and 1866. Twain stepped into this politically and
culturally complex world and his writings and speeches on Hawai‘i brought him early
fame and fortune between 1866 and 1873. We do not know whether Twain and
Lili‘uokalani met during his visit, but we do know that they both attended and wrote
about the funeral ceremonies held that year for the appointed heir to Kamehameha V.

4 For a Euroamerican perspective on Hawaiian history see Ralph S. Kuykendall and A. Grove Day, Hawaii:
5 Ibid, 136.
6 Ibid, 126.
The last Kamehameha died without a successor in 1873 as the last of that dynasty to rule Hawai‘i.

By the time Queen Lili‘uokalani published her autobiography and responded to the dominant Euroamerican renditions of Hawai‘i, thirty-one years had elapsed since Twain’s visit. In that period, the U.S.-descended haoles (or whites) had basically seized control of the Hawaiian government and economy. In 1887, Lili‘uokalani’s brother, King Kalākaua, was forced to relinquish most of the monarchy’s powers, and the native population’s rights, to a haole-controlled government. The Bayonet Constitution, as that document is referred to among the Native Hawaiians, was imposed upon Kalākaua by the haoles, literally at bayonet point. In 1891, after Kalākaua’s death, Lili‘uokalani became queen and immediately began working on a new constitution to restore the powers of the monarchy and of her people. In 1893, a haole-led coalition supported by U.S. Marines ousted Lili‘uokalani from the throne and the following year they declared Hawai‘i a republic.7 Lili‘uokalani’s protests about her dethronement to both Britain and the United States went unanswered, and in 1895 she was arrested on charges that she had helped plan a revolt against the republic.8 Lili‘uokalani, who was forced to abdicate, was eventually released in 1897 and quickly traveled to Washington, D.C. Once there, she wrote her autobiography and lobbied behind closed doors to stop the impending annexation of the Hawaiian Islands. The publication of her book in February 1898 was her main public effort against annexation. Hawai‘i was finally annexed into the United

7 For more details on the events leading to the monarchy’s ousting, see Osorio and Noenoe K. Silva, Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

States in August during the Spanish-American War, which had helped transform Hawai‘i into a desirable possession for U.S. control of the Pacific.\(^9\)

**On translation**

To understand how Twain’s and Lili‘uokalani’s representations of Hawai‘i functioned as translations within the transcolonial context of their historical moment, we must consider translation beyond its linguistic function. I use the term translation here in its more radical and broader sense, following postcolonial and other theorists who examine the act of translation in colonial contexts.\(^{10}\) Cheyfitz argues that “*translatio*” (Latin for “carrying across”) is “inseparably connected with a ‘civilizing’ mission, the bearing of Christianity and Western letters to the barbarians.” He maintains that from its very beginnings “the imperial mission is, in short, one of translation: the translation of the ‘other’ into the terms of the empire.”\(^{11}\) Under this rubric, translation includes texts, such as Queen Lili‘uokalani’s, which are written in English but originate in non-Euroamerican

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\(^{10}\) I use postcolonial not in a temporal way to mark the moment “after” colonialism, but to describe a “postcolonial condition. . . inaugurated with the onset rather than the end of colonial occupation.” See Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 3. On translation, Mexican author and literary theorist Octavio Paz notes how: “No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase.” See Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 3.

\(^{11}\) Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism*, 104, 105, 112. Cheyfitz argues that translation “was, and still is, the central act of European colonization and imperialism in the Americas.” Cheyfitz notes, for one, that homogenizing the diverse populations of the Americas under the name of “Indians” was “the primal act of translation.” He suggests that we view the “activity of colonization as translation, both in the sense of conversion from one language into another and in a metaphorical or transferred sense.”
cultures with the goal of “carrying-across” such cultures to a Euroamerican audience.¹² Lili‘uokalani wrote her text in English, which was her second language, and she makes clear throughout her autobiography that her rhetorical efforts are aimed specifically at her intended U.S. audience.

Within the clash of cultures endemic to colonialism, such as the context in which Twain and Lili‘uokalani wrote, textual representation is a crucial tool of translation. By “Othering” the foreign colonized in domestically familiar terms, certain representations function as translations that facilitate the project of colonial control through the dissemination of “knowledge” about the Other. In his work, Rowe identifies the “shifting analogies” drawn in U.S. literature and popular culture between “peoples of color, women and workers consistently colonized within the United States with a variety of ‘foreign’ peoples successively colonized by the United States outside its territorial borders” as the “double narrative of an emerging imperialist ideology.”¹³ I argue that this “double narrative” functions as a transcolonial discourse crafted through translation because the intra-continental colonized subject is easily Othered by being translated into existing colonial representations of extra-continental peoples through signifiers with negative connotations, such as savagery or indolence. Twain, who like many Euroamerican writers before him represents Hawaiians as “savages,” also renders the “foreign” indigenous people of Hawai‘i in demeaning ways used by the dominant U.S. culture to represent American Indians and African Americans. In utilizing such “dual


¹³ See John Carlos Rowe, Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism, 8.
narratives” as a form of translation, Twain knew his audience would easily understand the representations he crafted and would more readily believe that he delivered first-hand knowledge about the Native Hawaiians. Writing first in support of U.S. capitalist investment in Hawaiian sugar plantations and later as a vocal advocate of annexation, Twain repeatedly translates the Hawaiians into already known domestic racial and ethnic “Others.”  

Twain thus contributed to the dominant or European translations of colonized cultures that I describe as “colonial translations.” As I outlined above, one layer of colonial translation is the literary or textual representations of the colonial subject. But, as Cheyfitz argues, there also is another equally important layer to colonial translation. That layer is the material act of rendering, or translating, a colonized people into “the terms of empire” by transforming their religion and government and, ultimately, their culture. In the case of Hawai‘i, this material translation includes the work of religious conversion that sought to render or translate the Native Hawaiians into New England-style Protestants. Thus, my use of the term translation is not confined to the literal transference of word meanings or to the textual representations used in the service of translation. I also consider the ways in which the ethos of a colonized people is materially rendered into dominant terms by agents of colonialism, such as Christian missionaries. Both of these layers of translation, the textual and the material, become

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14 See Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 59. Kaplan argues that Twain “rendered native Hawaiians as both exotic and familiar in their unspoken resemblance to stereotypes of black slaves at home.”

knowledge created and disseminated by the colonizing culture about colonized societies in the service of imperialism. Such knowledge, as Rowe argues, becomes the “stable rhetoric” of an imperialist ideology that is easily deployed within the transcolonial, or shifting, contexts and varying locations of empire.

As the counterpoint to colonial translations, I use the term cultural translation to describe the acts of rendering through which the colonized attempt to equalize uneven relationships of power. Because Lili‘uokalani writes back in English to prevailing colonial translations of Hawai‘i, her type of cultural translation is part of the phenomenon of transculturation also found in the colonial contact zone. Transculturation describes the process through which colonized cultures strategically borrow from the dominant culture to invent new practices while retaining their own separate cultural traits. As an example of transculturation, Lili‘uokalani’s text renders Hawai‘i and the United States, at

Asad also argues that “the ethnographer’s translation/representation of a particular culture is inevitably a textual construct, that as representation it cannot normally be contested by the people to whom it is attributed, and that as a “scientific text” it eventually becomes a privileged element in the potential store of historical memory for the nonliterate society concerned.”

16 Asad, “The Concept of Cultural Translation,” 144. Asad compares the historian who is “given a text” to work with in crafting a historical narrative, to “the ethnographer [who] has to construct one.”

17 Rowe, Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism, 8.

18 I use the term cultural translation in the social anthropological sense of translating entire “modes of thought” rather than only language or written texts. But instead of limiting cultural translation to signify the interpretation and translation of “the discourse of alien societies,” I use cultural translation to also categorize the ways in which so-called “alien societies” in a colonial context translate themselves as well as the dominant societies who have interpreted them. For the standard definition of cultural translation see Asad, “The Concept of Cultural Translation,” 142.

19 First coined in the 1940s by Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz, the phenomenon of transculturation was expanded on by Pratt in Imperial Eyes, 6. See also Ortiz, Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 97-103.
the very least, as equals by focusing on European and Euroamerican concepts of constitutional monarchy, democracy and Christianity. This strategy operates in sharp contrast to one-sided translations, such as Twain’s, which simplified and commodified Native Hawaiian culture in dominant terms for U.S. and British consumption in the nineteenth century. Similar to Twain’s translations, however, Lili‘uokalani’s cultural translations drew upon well-known concepts to translate Native Hawaiians for her U.S. audience in easily comprehensible ways. Also similar to Twain, Lili‘uokalani has a clear political motivation for her cultural translation. Like Betances, Martí, and Rizal, she not only addresses the dominant translations against which she writes, but she also contests them by proposing her own translations of Native Hawaiian and of Euroamerican cultures. Not surprisingly, and unlike Twain, Lili‘uokalani bases her translation of Native Hawaiians on favorable representations that ultimately suggest the superiority of the indigenous people over many U.S. Americans.

Also unlike Twain’s one-sided colonial translations, and similar to what Betances, Martí, and Rizal do in their writings, Lili‘uokalani does not subsume her representation of Hawaiian-ness as an identity into its dominant Euroamerican version. Instead, her

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20 Bassnett and Trivedi, *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, 5. They note how “translation was for centuries a one-way process, with texts being translated into European languages for European consumption, rather than as part of a reciprocal process of exchange.”

21 Ibid, 21. Translation scholar Maria Tymoczko argues that post-colonial authors, whose texts emerge from colonial contexts, have much in common with translators: “where one has a text… the other has the metatext of culture itself.” In Lili‘uokalani’s case, she is both “post-colonial author,” in Tymoczko’s sense, and translator. Thus, her work is both textual and metatextual in that she is not only writing an autobiography but she also is writing the “metatext” of Native Hawaiian culture.

22 In this way, Lili‘uokalani engages in an act of translation similar to the notion of “anti-imperial translation” developed by American Indian studies scholar Arnold Krupat. For Krupat, American Indian texts in English evidence “indigenous perspectives” that make the English a “translation in which traces of
work functions as a two-way cultural translation, which simultaneously translates Hawaiian culture into Euroamerican terms and Euroamerican culture into Hawaiian terms. In doing so, Lili‘uokalani openly challenges colonial renderings of Hawai‘i at the same time that she questions the moral superiority of U.S. colonizers. For one, Lili‘uokalani represents the constitutional monarchy as more democratic than U.S. democracy and firmly establishes Hawaiian Christians, including herself, as truer Christians than many U.S. Americans. Lili‘uokalani’s text, seldom studied in the U.S. academy, has been discussed by Hawai‘i scholars as an important indigenous perspective of the events before annexation and a rhetorical challenge to Euroamerican discourses. Other critics have studied the text as an imitation and appropriation of European signifiers. The autobiography, however, has not yet been fully examined as the representation of a unique form of cultural translation with the transcolonial context of the late nineteenth century.23

In continually asserting her status as both a Native Hawaiian ruler and a Christian, European-style monarch in her text, Lili‘uokalani engages in a particular form of cultural translation that I want to call “indigenized translation.” I have coined this term to describe the specific process through which Lili‘uokalani concurrently translates


23 Kualapai, ”The Queen Writes Back: Lili‘uokalani’s Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawai‘i’s Queen,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 17, no. 2 (2005): 51. Kualapai notes how Lili‘uokalani “engages issues of cultural translation” and, “as a transcultural writer [aims] to render cultural differences as ‘intelligible’ as possible, knowing of course that some concepts will defy translation.” My argument goes further by identifying the type of cultural translation that Lili‘uokalani embarks on.
Euroamerican cultural symbols into Native Hawaiian ones, and Native Hawaiian symbols into Euroamerican ones. Indigenized translation refers to the transcultural project that Lili‘uokalani embarks on to make her argument, which, at the same time that it strategically deploys Euroamerican concepts of constitutional monarchy, democracy and Christianity, counterpoises existing colonial translations of Hawai‘i by privileging her indigenous perspective. Instead of openly challenging or simply dismissing the authority of some of the foundational elements of Euroamerican civilization, Lili‘uokalani “re-recognizes” or reinforces the power of such discourses for her own rhetorical purposes.\textsuperscript{24}

Chadwick Allen, a scholar of comparative indigenous literary studies, notes how indigenous activist writers, instead of questioning the authority or value of specific colonial discourses, will “reinstate and reinvigorate” the “original powers of legal enforcement and moral suasion” of such discourses.\textsuperscript{25} Like other indigenous activist writers, Lili‘uokalani indigenizes Euroamerican or transnational symbols of monarchical government, democracy and Christianity to contest dominant written and visual representations of her nation, her people and herself. I am primarily interested in the ways in which Lili‘uokalani deploys indigenized translation to purposefully and consciously insert her voice as a counterpoint to the contemporary discourses on late nineteenth-century U.S. imperial intervention. This chapter shows how Lili‘uokalani re-

\textsuperscript{24} See Chadwick Allen, \textit{Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 18. Allen argues that indigenous writers, specifically American Indian and Maori activist writers, “might re-recognize, rather than deconstruct, the authority of particular colonial discourses, such as treaties, for their own gain.” While Allen refers specifically to American Indian and Maori texts, his idea of “re-recognition” applies to Queen Lili‘uokalani’s indigenous activist work, which also seeks to “re-recognize” or reinforce the power of such discourses as constitutional monarchy, democracy and Christianity.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid. 19.
recognized specific dominant discourses through indigenized translation and positioned her text as a challenge to the dominant colonial translations of how and why Hawai’i was annexed to the United States.

In the first section of this chapter I examine the discursive context of Lili’uokalani’s text, including the dominant textual and visual colonial translations of Hawai’i between 1778 and 1893. I also focus on the main rhetorical strategies developed by Twain, who arguably produced the most well-known colonial translations of Hawai’i between 1866 and 1873. Twain, who traveled to Hawai’i as a newspaper correspondent for the influential Sacramento Union, first became famous for his letter dispatches from the islands. Later, he also obtained renown for his writings on Hawai’i and his lectures about “the Sandwich Islands,” which he gave more than fifty times throughout the United States and England. Such representations, I argue, comprise the main colonial translations of Hawai’i against which Lili’uokalani “wrote back” using her own rhetorical strategy of indigenized translation. These colonial translations also included visual representations, such as the unflattering cartoons of Lili’uokalani published in U.S. political magazines in 1893 and 1894. I contrast these visual colonial translations with the indigenized translation deployed by Queen Lili’uokalani in the frontispiece of her

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26 Kuykendall, Hawaii: A History, 135. Kuykendall states that Twain “did much to advertise the islands,” adding that his “writings about Hawaiian conditions and personalities were widely copied in American newspapers.”

27 See Fred W. Lorch, “Mark Twain’s ‘Sandwich Islands’ Lecture and the Failure at Jamestown, New York, in 1869,” American Literature 25, no. 3 (1953): 314. Known as “the ‘Sandwich Islands’ lecture,” Mark Twain’s account of his time in Hawai’i is said to have been his favorite over the years. It was the first public lecture he gave in fall of 1866, and he repeated it in a tour of Mississippi River towns and New York in 1867, and in the tour of 1869-70. During that tour, Twain gave the lecture at least fifty-five times. He also used it for his 1873 lectures in the States and in England. In England, Twain delivered the Hawai’i lecture fourteen times in thirteen days, according to Lorch. See also Lorch, “Mark Twain’s Public Lectures in England in 1873,” American Literature 29, no. 3 (1957): 298.
1898 autobiography. Specifically, I examine how Lili‘uokalani deployed indigenized translation by highlighting Native Hawaiian symbols and indigenizing Euroamerican symbols to craft the image of a strong, competent and popular indigenous queen. In the second section, I examine parts of the autobiography where Lili‘uokalani deploys indigenized translation. While the text’s complexity and breadth deserves and suggests many avenues of scrutiny, I focus specifically on the themes of government, culture, and religion to frame my analysis. I highlight these three themes to demonstrate how her strategy of indigenized translation was aimed at re-recognizing specific and highly charged dominant discourses. Finally, I discuss the ways in which juxtaposing Twain’s colonial renderings and Lili‘uokalani’s indigenized translations expands our understanding of how translation functioned within the transcolonial context of the late nineteenth-century.

“Dark Savages”: Colonial Translations of Hawai‘i from 1778 to 1893

By 1898, when Lili‘uokalani published her autobiography as a counterpoint to dominant representations of Hawai‘i, Europeans and U.S. Americans had spent one hundred and twenty years translating the Native Hawaiians. These colonial translations were generally demeaning and “Othered” Hawaiians in domestically familiar terms that were tailored for at-home consumption first in Europe and later in the United States. After 1778, when Captain Cook stumbled upon what he baptized as the Sandwich Islands, the Hawaiian Islands and its people entered the European imaginary solely on European terms. Devoting only a few pages of his extensive journals to the people he
found, Cook translates the natives of the Sandwich Islands into unremarkable, good-natured, unintelligent people who also are “innate” thieves. With a consistently condescending tone, Cook represents the Native Hawaiians as “neither remarkable for a beautiful shape, nor for striking features,” and as having “an openness and good-nature, [rather] than a keen, intelligent disposition.”

The Native Hawaiian women are “little more delicate than the men” and “have little claim to those peculiarities that distinguish the sex, in other countries.” While “bles with a frank, cheerful disposition,” the Native Hawaiians exhibit “a propensity to thieving, which seems innate in most of the people we have visited in this ocean.”

Cook takes on the tone of a scientist as he hypothesizes that thievery might be a genetic characteristic of the people of Oceania and that the natives appear “deeply impressed with a consciousness of their own inferiority.” In noting how the Native Hawaiians are aware of their inferior status in contrast to the English, Cook introduces the Native Hawaiian ethos into the European imaginary as self-consciously degraded. Further, by focusing on the natives’ open yet unintelligent character and on the lack of delicacy of their women, Cook effectively translates an entire people into negative terms with evident rhetorical resonance among his European audience.

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28 Cook, A voyage to the Pacific Ocean. A voyage to the Pacific Ocean. Undertaken, by the command of His Majesty, for making discoveries in the Northern hemisphere. ... In three volumes. Vol. I and II, written by Captain James Cook, F.R.S. Vol. III, by Captain James King, ... in English Short Title Catalogue, Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale Group) http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/servlet/ECCO/ (accessed July 11, 2007) 228.

29 Ibid, 229-230.

Following in Cook’s footsteps, U.S. missionaries in Hawai’i made significant rhetorical contributions to the narrative of a degraded Native Hawaiian identity. The first fourteen missionaries from New England settled in Hawai’i in 1820 to Christianize and “civilize” what they described as the “dark savages” of these islands.\(^{31}\) The main rhetoric developed by the missionaries in Hawai’i was one of “revulsion,” which identified the simplest Native actions as “depraved.”\(^{32}\) The missionaries also developed and propagated the notion of a Hawaiian “race,” translated into terms similar to those used to discriminate against African Americans in the United States. As noted above, the missionaries’ material process of colonial translation further entailed converting, or translating, the Native Hawaiians into Protestants, demanding that the indigenous people translate their native ways into U.S. terms. Through the forcible conversion of the Native Hawaiians into Christians, the missionaries sought to render the Native Hawaiians into Euroamerican terms comprehensible to themselves. Hawai’i scholar Houston Wood argues that the missionaries “worked tirelessly to alter every aspect of Hawaiian society.”\(^{33}\) Native Hawaiians were forced to eliminate individual customs, such as the wearing of flowers, as well as broader cultural traditions, such as “communal land holding and the independence of women.”\(^{34}\) The word ‘Hawaiian’ itself, along with the identity that the noun conjured in the Euroamerican imagination, was a Euroamerican


\(^{32}\) Idem.

\(^{33}\) Ibid, 39.

\(^{34}\) Idem.
invention. By the late nineteenth century, the dominant narrative on Hawai‘i located the natives in a developmental continuum that was “closer to dumb beasts” than to the Euroamerican standard established by Cook and his successors.

These initial colonial translations of Hawaiian identity by Cook and the missionaries were later expanded on by other notable British writers, and also by U.S. writers of renown, including Twain, Herman Melville, and Henry Adams. Melville spent four months in Hawai‘i in 1843 and his representation of the Native Hawaiians, and his denunciation of the influence of U.S. missionaries over Hawai‘i were included as an appendix to his South Seas novel, Typee. In that appendix, Melville describes how in 1843, after a brief cession of power to the British by Kamehameha III, Britain restored the Hawaiian monarchy and a ten-day period of celebration ensued. Melville notes how during the event:

the natives almost to a man plunged voluntarily into every species of wickedness and excess, and by their utter disregard of all decency plainly showed that, although they had been schooled [by the missionaries] into a seeming submission to the new order of things, they were in reality as depraved and as vicious as ever.

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35 Wood, Displacing Natives, 12. Wood notes how “The letter ‘n’ gives the word’s origins away, since ‘n’ is not one of the thirteen letters the nineteenth-century missionaries assigned to the Hawaiian alphabet.” Also, Wood notes how since Hawai‘i was the name given to the largest island, Euroamericans decided to call all islanders “Hawaiian” even if they hailed from O‘ahu or Maui. Wood discusses “Kanaka Maoli” as a non-Euroamerican term to describe the people of Hawai‘i.

36 Ibid, 36.


39 Melville, Typee, 258.
In ways that Twain will echo later, Melville represents the Native Hawaiians as superficially Christianized. For Melville, the native submissiveness is a ruse that veils their innate depravity and viciousness. Where Cook is condescending, Melville’s tone is almost hostile as he represents the Native Hawaiians as inherently and perpetually wicked.40

Such written colonial translations of Hawai`i were complemented in the nineteenth century by visual colonial translations that drew on the representation of the Native Hawaiians as innately corrupt. The figure below (Figure 4.1), titled “Which Will Win?”, was published in the magazine The Wasp in 1887, the same year that Lili`uokalani’s brother, King Kalākaua, was forced to sign the Bayonet Constitution. In the caricature, the king wears a dressing gown and slippers and is depicted as a hopeless drunkard with crown askew. Left of center, John Bull, a cartoon symbol of Great Britain, supports Kalākaua and pours out the liquor from the bottle onto the ground.41 Kalākaua’s wife, Queen Kapiolani, is racialized as an African-American “mammy,” complete with kerchief and apron, and wears a tiny, feathered crown. A kneeling President Grover Cleveland appeals to her. Kalākaua and Kapiolani – like Lili`uokalani after them – were known in the mainstream U.S. press as Native Hawaiians through the photographs taken during their visits to the United States and Europe. The fact that U.S. cartoonists chose to


41 John Bull is a cartoon representation of Great Britain similar to Uncle Sam. For a description of the cartoon, see http://library.kcc.hawaii.edu/~soma/cartoons/willwin.html.
racialize them as African Americans speaks to how such “dual narratives,” in Rowe’s sense, made colonial translations easily understandable for U.S. audiences.

The caricature translates the king and queen by “Othering” them as U.S. racial stereotypes and portrays them as simple pawns in the geopolitical struggle for power over

FIGURE 4.1

“Which will Win?”, 1887
Hawai‘i between the declining British empire and a rising U.S. empire. The British figure, who discards the liquor, suggests that Great Britain appeals to the king by discouraging his obvious “vices,” while a kneeling Cleveland, who addresses a scowling “mammy,” suggests that the U.S. government is at a disadvantage in its approach. Cleveland, on his knees and gesturing grandly in front of the queen, is criticized implicitly. In the transcolonial context in which competing imperialisms where still battling for control of the Pacific, the cartoon translates the Hawaiian monarchy into terms that justify the notion that Hawai‘i is up for the taking in an imperial tussle between Britain and the United States. By coding the Native Hawaiians as African Americans in the midst of a violent period of postbellum Reconstruction domestically, and of the rising imperial aspirations of the United States internationally, the cartoon translates Hawai‘i and its rulers into terms that articulated well-known racial and national anxieties. These visual representations were an important part of the body of colonial translations that began with Cook’s journals, were expanded on by the U.S. missionaries, and were later significantly added to and disseminated by U.S. writers, including Henry Adams.

Several years later, we find echoes both of Melville and of the caricature in Adams’ derogatory representation of Kalākaua, whose death in 1891 led to Lili‘uokalani’s accession to the throne. In Adams’ 1890 account of his visit to Hawai‘i, the U.S. historian describes his meeting with Kalākaua:

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42 See Kuykenhall, *Hawaii: A History*, 37. In 1794, Kamehameha I had placed Hawai‘i under the protection of the British and the Union Jack was flown over Hawai‘i until 1816. That year, the Hawaiian flag was flown, merging the stripes of the British Union Jack with the stripes of the U.S. flag in a metaphorical representation of the “predominant trading interests” that were most influential within Hawai‘i. In 1843, Hawai‘i was taken over briefly by the British over a dispute involving a British diplomat. During the 1840s, U.S.-descendants in Hawai‘i began to discuss the possibility of annexing the islands to the United States.
His Majesty is half Hawaiian, half Negro; talks quite admirable English in a charming voice; has admirable manners [but] . . . To be sure, His Majesty is not wise, and he has – or is said to have – vices, such as whiskey – and others; but is the only interesting figure in the government, and is really . . . amusing.  

Adams’ remarks on the king’s “admirable” language proficiency and manners and on his “charming voice,” suggest that Kalākaua has mastered the public performance of his role.  

But when it comes to Kalākaua’s character, Adams is quick to underline the king’s lack of wisdom and his vices as something “to be sure” about.  Adams goes on to remark that he has “listened by the hour to the accounts of [Kalākaua’s] varied weaknesses and especially to his sympathies with ancient Hawaiian and archaic faiths, such as black pigs and necromancy.”  

In repeating such “accounts,” Adams contributes to the narrative promoted by Kalākaua’s opponents, who wished to denigrate his strong nationalism and interest in ancient Native Hawaiian culture. Adams describes Kalākaua’s “sympathies” not only as anachronistic and useless, but also as related to “savage” practices, such as sorcery and witchcraft.  

Despite such reports about the king, Adams adds with some sarcasm, “[Kalākaua] sat up straight and talked of Hawaiian archeology, and arts as well, as though he had been a professor.”  

By noting that Kalākaua could sit up “straight” and talk “as though” he was a scholar, Adams again suggests that the king is performing civilization.  Adams thus

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44 Idem.


contributes to colonial translations of Hawai’i by rendering Kalākaua into terms that his U.S. audience clearly comprehended as negative. For one, Kalākaua’s U.S. opponents claimed that he was not a full-blooded Native Hawaiian but that he and Lili’uokalani were of African American descent.\textsuperscript{47} In a similar line, Adams translates Kalākaua into the stereotypically unwise, vice-ridden, drunken, if entertaining, U.S. racial “Other.”\textsuperscript{48} In keeping with contemporaneous colonial translations of Hawai’i, Adams’ translations reaffirm dominant representations of the Native Hawaiian monarchy as innately unfit to rule the islands.

In stark contrast to the representations by U.S. Americans of the king as weak, drunken and ineffectual, Kalākaua’s portrait below (Figure 4.2) shows a monarch who stands tall and strong in full military regalia.\textsuperscript{49} The king looks appropriately regal wearing ornate epaulets and belt, medals and sash, and holding the hilt of his sword in his white-gloved left hand. His ungloved right hand rests against a tall table with an embroidered tablecloth where what appears to be part of his feathered military bicorn hat also rests. Representing himself fully in Euroamerican terms, with no obvious suggestion of Hawaiian-ness other than the king’s body, Kalākaua’s portrait represents a strong,

\textsuperscript{47} Sandra Drake, “Justifying the 1893 Overthrow of the Hawaiian Government by Appeals to Anti-Black Prejudice: A Preliminary Essay,” (paper presented at the 2003 Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities, Honolulu, Hawai’i, January 12 - 15, 2003), 4. Drake notes how at the time of Kalākaua’s election as king in 1874, “a rumor was spread maintaining that Kalākaua was the child . . .of a certain Blossom, an African-American blacksmith residing in Honolulu. This assertion was disproved when it was demonstrated that the Blossom family had not immigrated to the Hawaiian Islands until the 1850s, by which time Kalākaua was in his teens.”

\textsuperscript{48} Wood, \textit{Displacing Natives}, 87. Wood notes how “Adams’ representation justifies action to usurp the Native government and replace it with that of a ‘superior’ race.”

\textsuperscript{49} See http://www.hulapreservation.org/Visuals/KalakauaH.jpg.
imposing monarch, fully in control of and willing to fight for his realm. The picture’s rhetorical power focuses entirely on the king for no royal crown or throne or palace or expensive props are used to highlight his position. Kalākaua looks serious and unsmiling but the casually ungloved right hand suggests that he also is relaxed and totally at ease in his position. The picture of the king thus acted as a visual counterpoint to the dominant

FIGURE 4.2

Portrait of King Kalākaua
and widely circulated Euroamerican translations of the Hawaiian monarchy to which Mark Twain had contributed.

“*The land of indolence and dreams*”: Mark Twain’s Renderings of Hawai‘i

The missionaries’ work is a central theme in the accounts Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), better known as Mark Twain, wrote of his four-month stay in Hawai‘i from March 18 to July 19, 1866. Before Twain became lauded as “the Lincoln of [U.S.] literature,” and only shortly after he adopted his pen name, Twain’s letters from and his later lectures and essays about Hawai‘i gave him early fame and notoriety in both the United States and England and contributed to his financial wellbeing. Twain wrote twenty-five letters as a correspondent from Hawai‘i for the Sacramento *Union*, although the last eight were published after he returned to San Francisco. Interestingly, Twain dated the letters written in California as if he had written them in Hawai‘i to give his accounts an authenticity that they lacked because he was writing them in the United States. Once in San Francisco and in need of remuneration, Twain began a lecture series that focused on the same topic for almost seven years and was often advertised under the provocative title, “Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands.” In 1872, Twain published a book on his travels West, titled *Roughing It*. When he found himself in need of additional material to fill that text, Twain drew on his Hawai‘i letters to

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51 Ibid, x.

52 Ibid, xi-xii.
complete the final chapters, adding new material as well.\textsuperscript{53} Twain also began writing a novel about Hawai‘i in 1884 and, while that work was not completed, scholars have suggested that he incorporated most of his Hawai‘i material into \textit{A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court}, published in 1889.\textsuperscript{54} Scholars argue that the novel’s indictment of feudal society in King Arthur’s England and the Connecticut Yankee’s desire to effect democratic social change were influenced by Twain’s opposition to the Hawaiian monarchy.\textsuperscript{55}

Twain attempted to return to Hawai‘i in 1895 but was not allowed off the ship because of a cholera epidemic.\textsuperscript{56} In 1897, Twain published his last Hawai‘i-related material as part of a chapter in another travel book based on his world lecture tour between 1895 and 1896, titled \textit{Following the Equator}.\textsuperscript{57} Until his death in 1910, however, Hawai‘i remained as a desired dream-scape for Twain who, in his own words, “always longed for the privilege of living forever away up on one of those mountains in the Sandwich Islands overlooking the sea.”\textsuperscript{58} Twain’s colonial desire for Hawai‘i is

\textsuperscript{53} Day, \textit{Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii}, xi.

\textsuperscript{54} For more on Twain’s novel on Hawai‘i see Sumida, “Reevaluating Mark Twain’s Novel on Hawaii.” See also Fred W. Lorch, “Hawaiian Feudalism and Mark Twain’s \textit{A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court},” \textit{American Literature} 8 (1946): 197-218.

\textsuperscript{55} Day, xiii; Kaplan, \textit{The Anarchy of Empire}, 57. Kaplan also argues that Hawai‘i becomes a site through which Twain can “remember to forget” the “interconnections between slavery and imperialism. . .in the re-creation of American national identity in the aftermath of the Civil War.”

\textsuperscript{56} Day, xiii; Kaplan, 54. Kaplan points out that while Twain was on ship waiting, Queen Lili‘uokalani was “imprisoned in a Honolulu jail for leading the struggle to maintain the last traces of Hawaiian sovereignty.”

\textsuperscript{57} Sumida, 589.

\textsuperscript{58} Day, xii; Kaplan, 57. Kaplan further suggests that Twain expressed “imperialism melancholia” or “a form of blocked mourning for both the victims of imperial violence and the lost privileges of imperial power, which for him were intertwined with the loss of slavery.”
primarily expressed in terms of the pastoral aesthetics of the place, as if the islands were uninhabited and unclaimed. Most of Twain’s pastoral descriptions of Hawai’i also fall within Annette Kolodny’s notion of the “American pastoral,” or “a yearning to know and to respond to the landscape as feminine.” More importantly, because Twain’s Hawaiian pastoral served a colonial yearning, his writings articulate what Kolodny identifies in the American pastoral as “the promise of fantasy as daily reality.” In many ways, Twain’s colonial desire for the Hawaiian land was fueled by the fantasy of attaining an earthly paradise, what he called “a Sunday land.”

Twain’s fledgling colonial desire is evident in the early title of his 1866 lecture, “Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands.” The term “fellow savages” suggests a fellowship between the Hawaiians and the U.S. audience and, in a letter to the editor, Twain was criticized for implying such a connection between “savages” and U.S. Americans as “a slander on the people of this great and enlightened nation.” Still, Twain surely enjoyed the discomfiture that his suggestion of some kind of association with the “savages” caused in his U.S. audience. What is clear is that the possessive pronoun “our” denotes ownership over such “fellow savages,” and that an unavoidable


60 Ibid, 7.

61 Lorch. “Sandwich,” 316. Lorch tells of how Twain’s lecture on Hawai’i was severely criticized by at least one indignant spectator who wrote an angry letter to the editor, which read in part: “‘Our fellow-cannibals!’ Now what does that mean? Cannibals are men who eat folks, ain’t they? And if they are our fellows it means we eat folks, too, if I understand it correctly, don’t it? Is this true? If not it is a slander on the people of this great and enlightened nation.”

62 Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire, 58. Kaplan notes how Twain acquired “cultural capital” by commodifying the material he garnered on the “Sandwich Islands.” “By assuming authority over a ‘primitive’ people abroad, he contradicted his earlier reputation as another kind of ‘primitive’ at home.”

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and uncomfortable fellowship between colonizer and colonized is inevitably created by any colonial relationship. In describing the Native Hawaiians as “our fellow savages,” Twain anticipated and advocated for the U.S. acquisition of these islands decades before their takeover was accomplished militarily and politically in 1898.63

Twain’s main rhetorical tool in crafting his famous lecture about Hawai‘i was his characteristic sarcastic humor. Through satire, Twain translated the “Sandwich Islands” into terms both amusing and easily comprehensible to his audiences. In this section, I focus my analysis on the 1866 lecture and related texts of 1873 because these works contain the main colonial translations that Twain contributed to the nineteenth-century narrative of Hawaiian-ness in the United States.64 One issue Twain directly addresses in his 1866 lecture is the drop in the population of Native Hawaiians and he does so by promoting the notion that progress in the colonial context cannot be achieved without an indigenous people paying the ultimate price. Twain explains that when Cook “discovered” the islands some “eighty or ninety years” before:

the population was about 400,000, but the white man came and brought various complicated diseases, and education, and civilization, and all sorts of calamities, and consequently the population began to drop off with commendable activity.65

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63 Day, Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii, viii. Twain’s 1873 letter, one of the texts I examine, favored the annexation of Hawai‘i.

64 For a detailed analysis of Twain’s letters and other Hawai‘i writings see Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire.

Twain sarcastically equates education and civilization with disease and “all sorts of calamities,” thereby parodying the popular Euroamerican view that the white man had rescued the Native Hawaiians from savagery. But by simultaneously promoting the dominant idea that the indigenous population did what it was expected to do by dying off, the parody on the attitudes of the dominant audience is achieved at the expense of, and by exploiting the audience’s prejudices against, the natives.

Twain then remarks how by the 1840s, when the native population was reduced by half, “and the educational and civilizing facilities being increased, [the Natives] dwindled down to 55,000, and it is proposed to send a few more missionaries and finish them.” Twain again parodies missionary work by highlighting how it contributed to the virtual genocide of the Native Hawaiians. However, his parody also becomes a “double narrative,” which translates the Hawaiian decimation into an analogy with which the U.S. audience was quite familiar. In analogizing between the Native Hawaiians and the American Indians, Twain’s translation supports the idea that indigenous people are expected to vanish because they cannot withstand the impending forces of modernity and civilization. Twain’s satire easily analogized the Native Hawaiians with the widely known discourse on the “Vanishing Indian,” as it was deployed in the service of expansion and empire when representing American Indian nations in the United States.66

66 Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 357. Slotkin notes in the context of Indian removal in the 1830s and after, “the Indian’s removal cast a tragic aura about his vanishing person that appealed to Romantic sensibilities. Whether by the natural processes of evolution, or by warfare with the whites, or by the ravages of white vices acquired through intermixing, or by forcible assimilation into the culture of his white ‘captors,’ the primitive Indian was clearly doomed. The rise and fall of his culture, like that of the Romans and Greeks, provided an image of the historical process which the new imperial republic was now entering. The replacement of the primitive Indian by the white settler confirmed the Americans’ belief in the
By directly addressing the costs of the colonial enterprise, Twain’s satire sought to subvert his audience’s complacent view of the civilizing project in Hawai’i. However, to make his satire effective, Twain deployed colonial translations, which served as a kind of shorthand that rendered the Native Hawaiians into well-known, mostly negative terms. These translations disseminated the idea that both the colonial fate of Hawai’i and the extinction of the Hawaiians were inevitable. Kaplan argues that the “humor in Twain’s lectures erupts from the incongruous juxtapositions of colonial encounters, in which he takes local history, customs, and culture out of context and recasts them in an American idiom.”\(^67\) This “double-edged humor,” Kaplan adds, serves to destabilize the “familiar ground” on which Twain’s U.S. audience “understood” Native Hawaiians, while at the same time it “works to mock [Twain’s] own civilized stance and to tease his audience with their colonial fantasies.”\(^68\) In laughing at his and his audience’s imperial desires, Twain deploys and promotes colonial translations of Hawai’i, which he initially used in support of U.S. capitalist investment in Hawai’i and later to advocate for annexation.\(^69\) Twain’s satire of Hawai’i serves his political and ideological motivations, which did not so much seek to challenge or thwart U.S. colonial ambitions as they served to promote them.

\(^67\) Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 60.

\(^68\) Ibid, 60.

\(^69\) Sumida, “Reevaluating Mark Twain’s Novel of Hawaii,” 588. Sumida notes how Twain “was assigned as a professional journalist to report on the Hawaiian sugar industry and to observe prospects for increased trade between California and the Hawaiian Kingdom.”
This complicity of Twain’s satire with U.S. colonial translations of Hawai‘i, whether conscious or not, is further evident in his choice of adjectives to describe the disappearance of the Native Hawaiians. Twain concludes that section of his lecture by stating:

> It isn’t the education or civilization that has settled them; it is the imported diseases, and they have all got the consumption and other reliable distempers, and to speak figuratively, they are retiring from business pretty fast. When they pick up and leave we will take possession as lawful heirs.\(^7\)

Twain’s biting parody suggests that what has “settled” the natives, in both the sense of “put in order” and of “colonize,” has been the “reliable” diseases that have basically done their expected work. Despite its cynical tone, the colonial undertones of the passage are in evidence when Twain remarks that he speaks “figuratively” when stating that the Native Hawaiians are “retiring from business” and “picking up and leaving.” Twain translates the near genocide caused by imported diseases, over which the indigenous people of Hawai‘i had no control and which brought them perilously close to extinction, into metaphors that suggest volition and choice on their part. Most significant, however, are the last words in that passage in which Twain states that “we,” as in the United States, “will take possession as lawful heirs.” The satire does suggest to his audience that the “inheritance” of Hawai‘i will be accomplished at the expense of the natives. But in establishing in his very next paragraph that the three-thousand “white people in the islands,” most of whom are U.S. Americans, “are the kings of the Sandwich Islands [because] the [native] monarchy is not much more than a mere name,” Twain promotes

\(^7\) Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 2.
the notion that the U.S. Americans have much to gain from this situation. Twain’s parody suggests that if the native monarch is only a figurehead and not the actual ruler of the island, then Hawai’i is the crown jewel up for grabs by the rightful heirs of such a kingdom: those who have the power to dominate.

After proposing Hawai’i as the rightful inheritance of the United States, Twain moves on to describe the nature of the “Kanakas,” as he refers to the Native Hawaiians. Twain describes them as being of “a rich, dark brown – a sort of black and tan” color, a “very pleasing tint,” and as “rather idle, but . . . not vicious at all,” and as “good people.” Twain goes on to explain how these pleasant people were governed in “the old times” through an oppressive system that consisted of an all-powerful king, followed by “the high priests who sacrificed human victims; [then] the great feudal chiefs, and then the common Kanakas, who were the slaves of all, and wretchedly oppressed.” Throughout the lecture, Twain resorts to largely anachronistic representations of the Native Hawaiians that would elicit negative reactions on the part of his U.S. American audience. These renderings included references to paganism, feudalism and chattel slavery, which translated the Hawaiian ethos into unfavorable and inaccurate terms.

71 Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 3.

72 As I discuss in the final section of the chapter, Queen Liliʻuokalani in 1898 cast the United States as the covetous King Ahab in her own metaphorical translation aimed at criticizing and stopping U.S. imperialist actions in Hawai’i.

73 Kanaka, in the Hawaiian language, means “a person, a human being.” See Osorio, Dismembering Lāhui, 290.

74 Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 3.

75 Idem.
In particular, it is interesting how Twain spends a portion of that lecture on his rendering of the situation of Native Hawaiian women:

Away down at the bottom of this pyramid were the women, the abject slaves of the whole party. They did all the work and were cruelly mistreated. It was death for a woman to sit at the table with her husband, or to eat of the choice fruits of the islands at any time.\textsuperscript{76}

Twain refers in this passage to the time before Christianity, when Native Hawaiian women were forbidden to eat with the men, and renders the women as “abject slaves” at the bottom of a pyramidal hierarchy. After this passage, Twain goes on to make a comment about women and fruit, making a satirical connection to the biblical tale of Adam and Eve and moving from the Native Hawaiian context into a Euroamerican one. Later in the lecture, Twain refers to the “women’s rights movement” in the United States, which further suggests that he highlighted the fate of women in Hawai’i to establish a link with the women in his audience.\textsuperscript{77} In this way, Twain exploited the major concepts that would make Native Hawaiian-ness easily and immediately knowable to all in his audience, male and female.

For Twain, and despite his parody of how they contributed to devastating the population, the U.S. missionaries were the protagonists of the Hawai’i story. They were the ones who “struck off the shackles from the whole race, breaking the power of the kings and chiefs. They set the common man free, elevated his wife to a position of

\textsuperscript{76} Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 3.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, 5. In making a joke about cannibalism in the islands, Twain requests that the audience “lend him an infant” on which he can demonstrate what a cannibal does. Twain states: “I know children have become scarce and high, owing to the inattention they have received since the women’s rights movement began.”
equality, and gave a spot of land to each to hold forever.”\textsuperscript{78} Without any apparent sarcasm now, Twain again translates the Native Hawaiian situation into U.S. terms by essentially describing what occurred in the United States after the Civil War, when the slaves were emancipated and many were granted a plot of land.\textsuperscript{79} And he directly credits the missionaries for “elevating” the Native Hawaiian women “to a position of equality.” Kaplan argues that Twain “brought to Hawaii unspoken questions and assumptions about slavery, emancipation, and race relations at home, and in the islands he found them refracted back to him from the apparently remote colonial context.”\textsuperscript{80} This perceived refraction enabled Twain, in turn, to translate the Hawaiian context into terms that resonated with current issues in the United States. Despite all of the missionaries’ progress in Hawai‘i, including the literacy campaign that he credits for turning Hawai‘i into “the best educated country in the world . . . not excepting portions of the United States,” Twain does not ultimately balance his representation of the Hawaiians in their favor.\textsuperscript{81} Echoing Melville, Twain is quick to note that all the missionary work could not ultimately take the “savage” out of the Native Hawaiians.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{78} Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 3.

\textsuperscript{79} Kaplan, \textit{The Anarchy of Empire}, 59-60. Kaplan argues that “Twain’s lecture rendered native Hawaiians as both exotic and familiar in their unspoken similarity to stereotypes of black slaves at home . . . Twain’s lectures thus positioned him in an implicitly racialized discourse of national identity where he could perform as a civilized white American by virtue of his travels among primitive people.”

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 75.

\textsuperscript{81} Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 3.

\textsuperscript{82} Kaplan, \textit{The Anarchy of Empire}, 82. Kaplan notes how Twain, by focusing on both past and present, made “the present look like window-dressing on an unyielding savage past, which can burst out at any moment.”
Twain returns to his sarcastic tone when discussing how hospitable the indigenous people are as he states that they “will do everything they possibly can to make you comfortable. They will feed you on baked dog, or poi, or raw fish, or raw salt pork, fricasseed cats – all the luxuries of the season.”\(^8^3\) Wanting to shock his audience’s sensibilities, Twain inserts references to “baked dogs” and “fricasseed cats” as seasonal delicacies in Hawai‘i. Later, when discussing the Native Hawaiians’ fondness for dogs, Twain notes how: “They feed this dog, pet him, take ever so much care of him, and then cook and eat him. I couldn’t do that. I would rather go hungry for two days than devour an old personal friend in that way.”\(^8^4\) This is one of the instances in which Twain draws the boundaries of the fellowship between himself and the “fellow savages” of his lecture. Twain goes on to parody the “cherished American sausage,” or the hot dog, as being basically the same thing as roasted dog “with the mystery removed.” But the humor only serves to underline his representation of the Native Hawaiians as irredeemable savages who eat their “personal friends” or pets. His humor also works in this way when he describes what he also calls the “Kanuckers” and “Kanakers” as swindling liars, who “will lie straight through, from the first word to the last. Not such lies as you and I tell, but gigantic lies, lies that awe you with their grandeur, lies that stun you with their imperial impossibility.”\(^8^5\) This last phrase of “imperial impossibility” suggests an opposition between the ineffectual Native Hawaiian lies and “such lies as you and I tell.”

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\(^8^3\) Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 4.

\(^8^4\) Ibid. 5.

\(^8^5\) Ibid. 4, 5.
as U.S. Americans, in pursuit of an emerging U.S. imperial possibility in Hawai‘i. As before, the parody of his U.S. audience is achieved at the expense of the Native Hawaiians.

Twain continues to deploy sarcasm in his denigrating representation of the “Kanakas” when he states that they not only are poor liars, but they also are “cruel” and will “put a live chicken in the fire just to see it hop about.” He spends some time in his description of Native Hawaiian cruelty, noting how:

They used to tear their hair and burn their flesh, shave their heads, knock out an eye or a couple of front teeth, when a great person or a king died – just to testify to their sorrow, and if their grief was so sore that they couldn’t possibly bear it, they would go out and scalp their neighbor, or burn his house down. . . They would also kill an infant now and then – bury him alive sometimes; but the missionaries have annihilated infanticide – for my part I can’t see why.86

Clearly tongue-in-cheek, Twain suggests that he sides with the “savage” Native Hawaiians in this tradition of infanticide. But while his audience knows that they are not to take Twain’s claim that he supports infant killings seriously, they also “know” that the dominant representation of Hawaiians as “savages” makes such a practice as burying an infant alive expectable among the natives. As Kaplan argues, Twain blurs the line between the Hawaiian past and present for rhetorical effect and to get the most mileage out of the colonial discourse of savagism. The wild, physical violence associated here with the Native Hawaiians in the tearing of hair, burning of flesh, shaving of heads, and knocking out of eyes and teeth, along with scalping neighbors and burning their houses, again represents the indigenous people of Hawai‘i in ways that were familiar to the

audience as part of the dominant colonial discourses. These representations contrast sharply with his initial description of the Native Hawaiians as “good people.” 87

As he nears the end of his lecture, Twain continues his demeaning representation of the Native Hawaiians by telling his audience that they “do nearly everything wrong end first.” He supports this statement with the following details:

They buckle the saddle on the right side which is the wrong side; they mount a horse from the wrong side; they turn out on the wrong side to let you go by; they use the same word to say ‘good-by’ and ‘good morning’; they use ‘yes’ when they mean ‘no’; the women smoke more than the men do; when they beckon to you to come toward them they always motion in the opposite direction; . . . the natives always stew chickens instead of baking them; they dance at funerals and sing a dismal heartbroken dirge when they are happy. . . 88

Twain’s representation satirizes the dominant belief that U.S. Americans did everything “right,” but it also reflects a degree of cultural anxiety about the Native Hawaiians. For one, these are people who are adept at riding horses but who buckle the saddle and mount them from “the wrong side.” If they are successful in this endeavor, then where does that leave the U.S. “right side” of doing things? Further, the fact that their salutations and farewells sound alike, and that the U.S. gesture for dismissal is the one they use when they actually want you to come toward them, makes both their verbal and non-verbal expressions suspect and untrustworthy in Twain’s translation. Finally, this portrait of untrustworthiness continues as he remarks how the Native Hawaiians stew what should be baked, dance when they are unhappy and wail when they are joyful. These indigenous

87 Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire, 82. Kaplan suggests that “Twain intrigues his readers with a back and forth movement. . . describing how the savage has become remarkably civilized yet emphasizing his savage past.”

88 Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 6; Kaplan, 60. Kaplan argues that through these descriptions Twain “turns the anarchy wreaked by colonialism into the carnivalesque, a world turned upside down.”
people, who do “everything” wrong because they do it in opposition to what U.S. Americans do, “are the kind of voters you will have if you take those islands away from these people as we are pretty sure to do one day.” Although Twain addresses the downside of colonialism by acknowledging the cost to the United States of taking the islands away from the Native Hawaiians, his concern is not for the Hawaiians. After predicting and anticipating the colonial fate of the Native Hawaiians, Twain articulates a degree of anxiety over the consequences of imperialism with regard to how these “savages” might affect the U.S. political landscape.

While Twain is generally sarcastic about the indigenous people of Hawai‘i, his descriptions of the islands themselves are filled with aesthetic pleasure and sentimentality. The climate, Twain states by the end of the lecture, “is delightful, it is beautiful,” and it is “wonderfully healthy, for white people in particular, so healthy that white people venture on the most reckless imprudence.” The recklessness that Twain attributes to white people is that they “get up too early . . . and they attend to all their business, and keep it up till sundown.” Thus, unlike the indolent natives, the climate in Hawai‘i makes white people more productive. Quite a propos of his original purpose as a correspondent for the sugar industry, Twain suggests that Hawai‘i is the ideal place for entrepreneurial capitalists to settle. At the same time, the land “lies out there in the midst

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89 Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 6.

90 Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire, 83. The humor in this statement concealed a racial anxiety that would have resonated clearly with his audience. Kaplan suggests that Twain’s “mockery of the Hawaiian citizens governing themselves would resonate at home with the postwar debates about the capacity of black people for participating in government. What may have looked comic abroad appeared more threatening at home to many white people in the North and South.”

91 Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 7-8.
of the watery wilderness, in the very heart of the almost soilless solitudes of the Pacific.”

Twain thus represents Hawai‘i as a land that exists in the solitudes of the ocean, available for the taking.

Twain concludes his lecture with this ode to the land:

> It is a dreamy, beautiful, charming land. I wish I could make you comprehend how beautiful it is. It is a land that seems ever so vague and fairy-like when one reads about it in books, peopled with a gentle, indolent, careless race . . . It is Sunday land. The land of indolence and dreams, where the air is drowsy and things tend to repose and peace, and to emancipation from the labor, and turmoil, and weariness, and anxiety of life.\(^2\)

For Twain, this “Sunday land” that offers him freedom from the toils of everyday life belongs to an indolent and gentle race. As the concluding remarks of his lecture, this passage suggests to his audience that such a paradise should not be in the hands of those who are “careless” and cannot defend the land from imperial intrusion. One plausible conclusion to be drawn from Twain’s suggestions is that Hawai‘i should be taken by the U.S. Americans before any other empire beats them to the goal. In his first Hawai‘i lecture, Twain not only anticipates the U.S. colonial takeover of the islands, he also anticipates the discourses about Hawai‘i that have become cultural commonplaces in the United States. Twain articulates the currently dominant view of Hawai‘i as an ideal place for U.S. Americans to unwind and leave their daily fray behind, with no second thought for the indigenous people who once ruled the land.

Twain’s colonial desire becomes more overt and has an even sharper imperialist edge in his later “Sandwich Islands” writings, which were published in 1873. As he does

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\(^2\) Twain, “Our Fellow Savages,” 8.
in his earlier version, Twain sarcastically refers to the decimation of the Native population through the “labor and fancy diseases” imported by the merchants as a “long, deliberate, infallible destruction,” and to the contribution of the missionaries as the “two forces. . .working along harmoniously” toward that end. In an expression of imperialist nostalgia, Twain remarks how he “is truly sorry that these people are dying out, for they are about the most interesting savages there are.” These interesting savages, Twain says, are “the simplest, the kindest-hearted, the most unselfish creatures that bear the image of the Maker.” Twain thus bemoans the loss of these simple, unselfish “creatures” with little apparent consciousness of what it means that an entire nation and its culture should vanish. As he does in his 1866 lecture, Twain represents the vanishing of the Native Hawaiians as an expected and inevitable part of progress in Hawai‘i. That representation, because it functions as a colonial translation, is in the service of the U.S. project of empire, regardless of whether Twain actually meant to endorse the extinction of the Native Hawaiians.

In his 1873 colonial translations of the “Sandwich Islands,” however, Twain is much more emphatic and vocal about the benefit of capitalist investment in Hawaiian sugar. If there was any ambivalence in Twain about the U.S. colonial project in Hawai‘i


94 Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire, 56. Kaplan notes that “Twain’s recollections of Hawai‘i might be understood as an expression of what Renato Rosaldo has called ‘imperialist nostalgia,’ the longing to salvage an imagined pristine pre-colonial culture by the same agents of empire – missionaries, anthropologists, travel writers – who have had a hand in destroying it. Imperialist nostalgia disavows the history of violence that yokes the past to the present. . .”

95 Twain, “The Sandwich Islands, 1873,” 17.

96 Kaplan, 68. For Kaplan, Twain writes “as though death were a signature of Hawaiian culture.”
in 1866, by 1873 that ambivalence has resolved itself. In his later writings, Twain reveals the keen and less sentimental eye of a capitalist and there is much less of the affective tone and aesthetic focus of the earlier lecture. After noting, as he does in his 1866 lecture, that “Americans are largely in the majority” in Hawai‘i, Twain adds that:

There are only 200,000 acres of this productive soil, but only think of its capabilities! In Louisiana, 200,000 acres of sugar land would only yield 50,000 tuns of sugar per annum, . . . but in the Sandwich Islands, you could get at least 400,000 tuns out of it.97

After claiming that the Hawaiian soil could yield up to “five tuns” of sugar per acre, Twain explains why “these planters would like to be under our flag.”98 Directly referring to the efforts of U.S. Americans in Hawai‘i to annex the islands to the United States in the 1870s, Twain matter-of-factly, and with no sarcasm, discusses how annexation would represent a windfall of profits both to these sugar planters and to the United States.

In discussing the role of the Hawaiian government in this scheme, Twain speaks of the monarchy as governing “a toy realm, with its toy population,” and the “little legislature [being] as proud of itself as any parliament could be, and [putting] on no end of airs.”99 Not only does Twain suggest here that the Hawaiian kingdom and its subjects are very small and easily handled, he also suggests that the islands’ government is not a “real” one and he ridicules its self-importance by describing it as nothing more than a toy to be played with. He continues his discussion of the Hawaiian royalty by recalling the

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97 Twain, “The Sandwich Islands, 1873,” 19. Twain is using the now archaic “tun,” which has been replaced by ton and other measurements of weight.

98 Idem.

1866 funeral ceremonies for the last Kamehameha descendant, Princess Victoria (an event also alluded to by Lili‘uokalani in her autobiography). In his description, Twain portrays “the Christianized heathens. . .howling and dancing and wailing and carrying on in the same old savage fashion that obtained before Cook discovered the country.” Twain describes how he:

got into the [palace] grounds one night and saw hundreds of half-naked savages of both sexes beating their dismal tom-toms, and wailing and caterwauling in the weird glare of innumerable torches; and while a great band of women swayed and jiggered their pliant bodies through the intricate movements of a lascivious dance called the hula-hula, they chanted an accompaniment in native words.100

This description, which again echoes Melville, also reinforces many of the colonial translations that Twain promulgated in his earlier lecture. For one, the Christianized savages continue their heathen practices behind the locked doors of the palace. The funeral scene that Twain crafts as being “carried out” in the “old savage fashion” conjures the stereotypical eerie image of savages beating their “tom-toms,” while they wail and caterwaul under the “weird light” of their torches. The entire passage throws into question the so-called Christianization of the Native Hawaiians, especially when Twain adds that the women dance the “lascivious hula-hula” with “their pliant bodies” while they chant in their native language. Despite the civilizing work of the missionaries, Twain suggests, the Native Hawaiians remain savages at heart even at the highest echelons of their society.

100 Twain, “The Sandwich Islands, 1873,” 24; Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire, 70. Kaplan states that Twain’s “writing transformed unbounded expressions of grief into enticing spectacles of sexual excess” and used the hula dance “as a metonymy for native sexuality.”
After this representation of the Hawaiians’ innate savagery, Twain ends his 1873 essay on the Sandwich Islands by advocating annexation:

Now, let us annex the islands... Let us annex. We could make sugar enough there to supply all America, perhaps, and the prices would be very easy with the duties removed. And then we would have such a fine half-way house for our Pacific-plying ships... and such a convenient supply depot and such a commanding sentry-box for an armed squadron.101

Twain’s interest in Hawai‘i progresses from expressing colonial desire in 1866 to advocating for full-fledged colonialism in 1873. For Twain, Hawai‘i has become a desirable colonial possession because of its evident economic and military advantages and because the imperialist project would be easily achieved given the United States’ experience in handling similar “savages.” “Let us annex, by all means,” Twain continues, adding that they could “pacify” the Native monarch and his nobles “easily enough” by relocating them “to reservations.”102 “Nothing pleases a savage like a reservation,” Twain argues, “a reservation where he has his annual hoes, and Bibles and blankets to trade for powder and whisky – a sweet Arcadian retreat fenced in with soldiers.”103 Deploying sarcasm once more, Twain ridicules the idea of reservations as Eden-like places where American Indians “retreat” in rural bliss while they are “fenced in with soldiers.” But this satire is achieved by once more analogizing the Hawaiian “savages” with the American Indians, who were literally forced to retreat into reservations. Twain thereby deploys the discourse of savagism that was used by the U.S. government to justify such actions. Even more directly than he did in his 1866 lecture,

101 Twain, “The Sandwich Islands, 1873,” 27.

102 Idem.

103 Idem.
Twain deploys the “double narrative” of empire to translate the Native Hawaiians into the stereotype of the American Indian nations. Like the American Indians whose lands were taken, Twain suggests that such dispossession is a predictable process in the colonization of Hawai’i.

After concluding with the statement that “We must annex those people,” Twain predicts:

> We can make that little bunch of sleepy islands the hottest corner on earth, and array it in the moral splendor of our high and holy civilization. Annexation is what the poor islanders need. “Shall we to men benighted, the lamp of life deny?”¹⁰⁴

Clearly sarcastic when he suggests that the U.S. Americans can bring the “moral splendor of their high and holy civilization” to the Native Hawaiians, Twain is at the same time clear that annexation is necessary for the progress of Hawai’i. By ending with a quote from the 1819 British imperialist hymn, titled “From Greendland’s Icy Mountains,” Twain’s sarcasm serves to work more in favor of, than against, the U.S. imperialist cause.¹⁰⁵ Twain draws this futuristic vision of Hawai’i under U.S. control by deploying the well-worn rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, promoting the notion that the Hawaiians are in need of rescue through the U.S. brand of enlightenment, however suspect he found the latter.¹⁰⁶

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¹⁰⁴ Twain, “The Sandwich Islands, 1873,” 28-29.


¹⁰⁶ William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*, 87-88.
While Twain’s words were not meant to be taken at face value, his satires on Hawai‘i served his pro-annexation stance well by transforming an arguably serious subject into a humorous joke. To develop his parody, Twain implicates his U.S. audience and the Native Hawaiians in a well-known narrative of expected colonial domination and extinction. Thus, the sarcasm serves to minimize concerns over the costs of imperialism by investing such actions with a seemingly easy and unavoidable resolution. Twain renounced his well known pro-imperialist beliefs by 1898 when he became perhaps the most vocal anti-imperialist writer in the United States (more on this in the Conclusion).

But before he became a committed anti-imperialist, Twain’s popular and widely disseminated texts about Hawai‘i promoted and naturalized the racial and colonial discourses of his time that helped pave the discursive way of U.S. empire. Twain’s works were particularly significant since his speeches and writings were invested with the particular authority of his presenting himself as an ordinary person, much like his reader or auditor.\footnote{Wood, \textit{Displacing}, 87.}

For his audiences’ consumption, and through his brand of satirical colonial translations, Twain establishes Hawai‘i as a land to be desired and obtained, filled with irredeemable, if gentle, savages who owed their progress (albeit at the cost of their near extinction) to the U.S. missionaries. Further, by drawing on the “double narrative” provided by the U.S. cultural context, such as post-bellum discourses of race, the discourses of the Vanishing Indian and the women’s rights movement in the nineteenth century, Twain makes his colonial translations of Hawaiians easily comprehensible to his
U.S. audience. Because of Twain’s renown and the dissemination of his works, Houston Wood argues that Twain’s descriptions of Hawai’i, especially those discussed above in the 1866 “Sandwich Islands” lecture, were “the single most influential” passages about Hawaiians “ever produced.”\(^{108}\) Twain’s Hawai’i writings, which brought him early fame and relative fortune, were acts of colonial translation that allowed him to easily propagate his view on the unknown indigenous more widely and effectively than if he were a literal translator doing a word-by-word translation of a Hawaiian text into English.\(^{109}\) His material constitutes some of the most important and well-known colonial translations of Hawai’i against which Lili’uokalani wrote her autobiography.

Although Lili’uokalani does not mention Twain by name in her text, it is highly probable that the well-read monarch was familiar with his renowned remarks about Hawai’i.\(^{110}\) In her autobiography, Lili’uokalani writes about the “accounts inspired by the missionary party, published by them or their agents” in Hawai’i and in the U.S. press, “or invented by enterprising scribblers for the purpose of deceiving the American public.”\(^{111}\) The pairing of “enterprising,” in both its sense of ambition and industry, and

\(^{108}\) Wood, *Displacing*, 86.

\(^{109}\) Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 58. Kaplan notes how: “On both sides of the Atlantic, the press called upon [Twain] as an authority on [the Hawaiian monarchy and politics] and the possibility of U.S. annexation. Thus Mark Twain made his well-known transition from the Western frontier to America’s Eastern literary center and on to Europe by pursuing the less well-known course of empire in the Pacific.”

\(^{110}\) See Helena K. Allen, *The Betrayal of Liliuokalani: Last Queen of Hawaii, 1838-1917* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1982), 113. The queen’s biographer notes how Kamehameha V had read one of Twain’s dispatches to the *Union* in which Twain told “of customs pre-dating the death of Kamehameha I, as if they were still being practiced.” Allen states: “These practices were accepted in the United States as being current even as late as 1895, and attributed erroneously to the time of Queen Liliuokalani’s reign (1891-1893).”

\(^{111}\) Lili’uokalani, *Hawai’i’s Story*, 353.
of “scribblers,” as both hasty and careless writing, and of an author “without worth,” suggests the intriguing possibility that Liliʻuokalani thought of Twain as being included within this “scribbling” category. The rhetorical persuasiveness of Twain’s translations contributed to how Liliʻuokalani herself would be translated, setting the stage for her intervention as a cultural translator.

**Drawing the line: Visual translations of Hawai‘i**

Twain’s widely disseminated colonial translations of Hawaiʻi were not the only representations of Hawaiʻi circulating prior to the time that Liliʻuokalani wrote her autobiography. The Hawaiian queen also had to challenge dominant visual translations of herself, which like those of her brother before hers were popular in the United States. These political cartoons routinely portrayed her as a native woman mimicking royalty, and ridiculed her for claiming a right to monarchical power. One cartoon published in 1893, or the year in which she was deposed (Figure 4.3), appeared in the influential U.S. political magazine *Judge*. In this visual translation of Liliʻuokalani, her caricature is precariously hoisted by U.S. marines and soldiers using their bayonets while “dark savages” in loincloths cheer in the background. The caption reads: "Our good-natured country may allow this administration to give our market to England, sell our embassies to Anglomaniac dudes, and cause the reduction of wages to the European standard. But..." The cartoon, titled "We Draw the Line at This," once more articulates the ongoing

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112 Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 71. Interestingly, Twain referred to himself as a “scribbler” in his letters.

113 See http://library.kcc.hawaii.edu/~soma/cartoons/draw.html.
FIGURE 4.3

“We Draw the Line at This,” 1893

rivalry between Britain and the United States, similar to the 1887 cartoon on King Kalākaua discussed above. This cartoon also suggests that supporting the Hawaiian
monarchy is the last straw in what the caricature represents as poor government administration. In the caricature, Lili'uokalani is portrayed as a hybridized figure, part American Indian and part African American, with crown askew and feathers on her long, unkempt hair. She looks out of place on a makeshift wooden throne, with legs splayed apart, barefoot, in "native-looking" attire, and holding two documents that read "scandalous government" and "gross immorality." The cartoon suggests that without the support of the U.S. military, and by extension, of the U.S. government, Queen Lili'uokalani’s corrupt, ineffectual and immoral reign would teeter and fall.

Further, the caricature draws on the representations of Hawaiians, specifically of the Hawaiian royalty, which had become commonplace in the U.S. media, such as the evident signifiers of race. This particular caricature further hybridizes the queen’s figure by incorporating American Indian stereotypes related to indigeneity and savagism, such as the feathers on her head and the “native-looking” dress. This additional hybridization helped to translate Lili’uokalani into Euroamerican representations of natives in need of “civilization,” whom U.S. Americans perceived as already conquered. The cartoon thus deploys not only the signifiers that established Lili’uokalani as racially “unfit” but also those that connected her to discourses of a vanishing “savage” indigeneity. Like the textual translations of Native Hawaiians discussed in the first section, this cartoon translates Lili’uokalani into terms easily understood by the U.S. audience as representing her irredeemably savage nature.114

114 Drake, “Justifying the 1893 Overthrow,” 7. Drake argues that “in their fight against her reinstatement as legitimate head of a legitimate Hawaiian government, the European-Americans from the United States, and settlers in Hawaii of European-American descent, reviled Queen Liliuokalani for what, in their ideology, was the most terrible and telling flaw of all: that she had African ancestry.”
A year later, the same magazine published a cartoon of Liliʻuokalani as its cover, which racialized her even more clearly as an African American. The cartoon shows a short dark woman, with closely cropped and crimped hair, large hoop earrings and a malicious look on her face. She is striking a coquettish pose, with a large fan on her left hand and her right arm bent at the hip of her short feathered skirt. She also has high heels, a pearl necklace and a tiny crown on her head. The cartoon is related to a poem, titled “Lili to Grover,” which says: “You listened to my DOLE-ful tale;/ You tried your best – ’twas no avail./ It’s through no fault of yours of mine/ That I can’t be your VALENTINE.”115 Similar to caricatures of her brother Kalākaua, this cartoon of Liliʻuokalani featured the queen "with exaggerated Negroid features and black skin, signifiers to Americans that the Queen was of a race unsuitable to rule."116 Further, the caricature suggests that President Cleveland has been seduced by Liliʻuokalani’s complaints against the establishment of the Hawaiian Republic, presided over by U.S.-descendant Sanford B. Dole. This caricature was published on the same year that Queen Liliʻuokalani was actively petitioning the U.S. government for reinstatement.

In stark contrast to the colonial translation evident in these cartoons, the frontispiece to Liliʻuokalani’s 1898 autobiography is a black-and-white photograph of a standing queen in fully corseted Victorian regalia with a caption that reads, "Her Majesty Queen Liliuokalani.” The stunning full body portrait (Figure 4.4) translates Liliʻuokalani’s Native Hawaiian body into transnational Euroamerican signifiers of

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115 Wood, Displacing, 88.
116 Ibid, 87.
power, such as an elaborate white Victorian dress with a long train, dark sash with a military cross, and jewels, which mark her as royal. Simultaneously, however, Lili‘uokalani also wears a feathered lei around her neckline which recalls the feather collars, capes and cloaks of the ancient high chiefs. She also wears what appear to be Native bracelets as she stands against a painted background of tropical flowers, palms, and a bamboo arch, which frame her pose. The light color and white flowers of the wall painting create a sharp contrast for Lili‘uokalani's dark skin, as does her white dress and feathered neckline. This juxtaposition, clearly evident in the inclusion of both the feathered lei and the sash with military cross, suggests a rhetorical effort to highlight the simultaneity of the native body and the Victorian attire, of the local indigenous and the transnational Euroamerican.

In the frontispiece, Lili‘uokalani’s indigenous body becomes the emblem of the royal power she wields. While she attempts a relaxed demeanor by resting one arm on the back of the large upholstered chair, Lili‘uokalani looks regal as she soberly stares off camera to project a royal bearing in control of her position as sovereign. Unlike the disarrayed 1893 cartoon's figure, which sits on a throne that invests her with power, and which is, in turn, supported by U.S. Marines and soldiers, Lili‘uokalani stands alone next to a chair that is clearly not the Hawaiian throne. The portrait argues that Lili‘uokalani requires no physical throne to legitimize her rule because the sovereignty of the Native Hawaiian monarchy and nation is contained in her physical body. Like her brother’s

117 See Figure A.1, in the Appendix, for a picture of Queen Victoria, who was mostly photographed sitting instead of standing, especially in her later pictures and portraits. See http://poemsandprose.blog.co.uk/2006/08/
FIGURE 4.4

Portrait of Queen Lili`uokalani
portrait, Lili‘oukalani opts for a standing, almost militaristic pose as her stance, projecting self-assurance and power. The high-couture dress, with the yards-long train, also highlights her opulence and her meticulous attention to her public persona. In sharp contrast to her brother’s portrait, however, Lili‘oukalani’s representation includes evident and important symbols of her Hawaiian-ness.\textsuperscript{118}

Hawaiian scholar Noenoe Silva suggests that while her "ostentatiously expensive gown and jewelry signify her real wealth . . . her brown skin confounds the notion that upper-class, royal status belongs only to white people."\textsuperscript{119} Also unlike the dominant representations of indigeneity and savagism evident in the caricature, Lili‘oukalani’s hair is demurely coifed and her attire suggests access to the markets of European high fashion. At the same time, by standing in front of a misty tropical landscape instead of a blank background (such as the one in her brother Kalākaua’s portrait), Lili‘oukalani evokes her indelible connection to the Hawaiian Islands. By translating Victorian sartorial signifiers into a Hawaiian context and by simultaneously indigenizing transnational symbols of monarchical power, Lili‘oukalani’s portrait eloquently argues the very opposite of the caricature.

Further, Lili‘oukalani’s portrait functions as the visual prologue for the linguistic and cultural translation work that she engages in throughout her text. Even a casual observer, unfamiliar with Lili‘oukalani’s position as the last Hawaiian monarch, can tell through the visual rhetoric of her stance, clothing, accessories, and setting that she

\textsuperscript{118} See http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/liliuokalani/hawaii/hawaii.html.

represents royalty. Unlike the portraits of her European counterparts, however, the story Lili‘uokalani’s image tells is not only about the transnational signifiers of power evident in such visual rhetoric.\textsuperscript{120} Lili‘uokalani’s portrait also tells the story of how her Native Hawaiian body indigenizes transnational symbols of monarchical power. Through a dialogic translation between two races, cultures, languages and worldviews, Lili‘uokalani renders the story of Hawai‘i, specifically that leading to the ousting of the Hawaiian monarchy, in her own indigenous terms.

\textbf{“A martyr to the cause of my people”: Liliuokalani’s Indigenized Translation}

Part autobiographical narrative, part political manifesto, and part historical document, Lili‘uokalani’s autobiography was written in 1897 and published six months before the annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States the following year. The original edition spans four-hundred-and-fourteen pages, including fifty-seven chapters, seven appendixes, an epilogue, a bibliography and twenty-one photographs. Lili‘uokalani’s work represents “the only Native Hawaiian chronicle of the overthrow published in the United States during the period and one of the few histories of the Hawaiian monarchy written from a Native Hawaiian perspective.”\textsuperscript{121} As I mentioned in the chapter’s introduction, I focus my discussion on three main themes – government, culture and religion – to examine how Lili‘uokalani builds her multi-pronged rhetorical strategy of

\textsuperscript{120} Louis Marin, \textit{Portrait of the King} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 5, 14. Marin argues that the monarch’s portrait embodies the sovereign’s power by both restating and duplicating it. Likewise, Lili‘uokalani’s portrait “signifies and shows this place of transit between the name, where the body has become signifier, and the narrative, the story, through which law has become body.”

\textsuperscript{121} Kualapai, “The Queen Writes Back,” 42.
indigenized translation to write against annexation. Her rhetorical purpose in discussing such themes is two-fold. First, Lili‘uokalani sought to persuade U.S. Americans that the illegal and colonial annexation of Hawai‘i was an inherent contradiction of their much-vaunted culture of democratic principles. Also, Lili‘uokalani wrote to contest the colonial representations of the Native Hawaiian monarchy as tyrannical and ineffectual and of the indigenous people and of herself as immoral, heathen savages. Instead, her text provides an indigenous counterpoint that de-centers and contests long-standing representations of the Hawaiians as a people who willingly yielded their sovereignty to the United States.

Similar to how she crafted her frontispiece, Lili‘uokalani utilized indigenized translation throughout her autobiography to translate herself into Euroamerican terms. That her translation drew on Victorian symbols of monarchy is no coincidence. The main transnational symbol of monarchical power in the nineteenth century with which Queen Lili‘uokalani identified was the figure of the British Queen Victoria, the most powerful empress in the world at that time. Some critics have dismissed Lili‘uokalani’s rhetorical deployment of the transnational symbols of power associated with Queen Victoria as simple mimicry. In contrast, I read Lili‘uokalani’s rendering of herself in

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122 For the 1887 Jubilee portrait of Queen Victoria see Figure A.1 in the Appendix. For more on the relationship between Queen Victoria and the mass media see John Plunkett, *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a discussion of Victoria’s role “as a blazing global sign of Great Britain’s imperial reach and strength,” see Margaret Homans, *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1876* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

123 See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (New York: Routledge, 2002). 4. Many postcolonial theorists posit imitation, or mimicry, of the colonizer by the colonized as propelled by "a desire not only to be accepted but to be adopted and absorbed [and which] caused those from the periphery to immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origins in an attempt to become 'more English than the English.'" Homi Bhabha’s
Victorian terms as a way to clearly signal her status as the highest-born Native Hawaiian woman in ways that were intelligible to her U.S. audience. After all, Queen Victoria was the most recognizable European analogue to her own position. But Lili‘uokalani also uses the British queen as a mirror against which she can reflect herself to raise a rhetorical question. Through her identification with Queen Victoria, Lili‘uokalani leads her readers to wonder why the U.S. Americans who actively advocated for the Hawaiian queen’s removal, and who argued against monarchy as a repulsive system of government, did not meddle with Queen Victoria. As Lili‘uokalani herself states, “the only charge against me really was that of being a queen,” thereby suggesting that it is her role as the sovereign of the Hawaiians that makes her a target for her U.S. opponents and adversaries.124

In examining Lili‘uokalani’s decision to underline her position as queen, Victorian scholar Robin L. Bott argues that the Hawaiian monarch misjudged U.S. attitudes “toward kings” and she concludes that Lili‘uokalani’s “self-fashioning failed her.” “To her American audience,” Bott proposes, “monarchy equaled tyranny.”125 This interpretation is echoed by Hawai‘i scholar Lydia Kualapai who also argues that

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124 Lili‘uokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story*, 280.

125 Bott, “‘I know what is due to me’: Self-Fashioning and Legitimization in Queen Liliuokalani’s Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawai‘i’s Queen,” in *Remaking Queen Victoria*, eds. Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich (London: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 151.
Lili‘uokalani underestimated her U.S. audience's antipathy toward monarchy. Such readings, however, fail to consider Lili‘uokalani’s own argument that the Native monarchy was accused of tyranny and oppression because they, in their defense of national sovereignty, were “in the way” of the U.S. imperial-colonial project in Hawai‘i. Thus, by establishing a connection between herself and Queen Victoria, a queen who was respected and even admired by U.S. Americans, Lili‘uokalani sought to confront her mostly U.S. audience with the contradictions inherent in the imperialist actions of a so-called democratic government. Lili‘uokalani wanted to call the direct attention of her readers to how the U.S. government had overthrown her legitimate constitutional monarchy and illegally annexed her sovereign nation. I argue that it was precisely because of the rhetorical risks inherent in defending monarchy to a largely anti-monarchical audience that the highly educated and rhetorically savvy Lili‘uokalani translated her position into that of the British Queen Victoria. Through this act of indigenized translation, Lili‘uokalani sought to emphasize her connections to the long-standing institution of constitutional monarchy and to advocate for its validity and for its legitimacy as a system of government just as much in England as it in Hawai‘i.

One way in which Lili‘uokalani argued that the Hawaiian monarchy had as much right to rule as the British monarchy was by deploying symbols that were translatable into both indigenous and Euroamerican terms. In one passage, Lili‘uokalani uses the symbol of the star, which is invested with both indigenous and Christian meaning, to rhetorically

126 Kualapai, “The Queen Writes Back,” 57. Kualapai argues that Lili‘uokalani “no doubt underestimated the U.S. republic’s intolerance for monarchy, especially when sovereignty is embodied in a Native Hawaiian woman. Her ability to convey the untranslatable was no doubt diminished by her readers’ general resistance to cultural differences.”
legitimize her brother Kalākaua’s ascension as king of the Hawaiians. Lili‘uokalani describes the moment of her brother’s coronation in 1883:

In the very act of prayer, . . . before [the crown was placed] on the brow of the king, a mist, or cloud, such as may gather very quickly in our tropical climate, was seen to pass over the sun, obscuring its light for a few minutes; then at the moment when the king was crowned there appeared, shining so brilliantly as to attract general attention, a single star. It was noticed by the entire multitude assembled to witness the pageant, and a murmur of wonder and admiration passed over the throng.\textsuperscript{127}

Here Lili‘uokalani suggests that the single star that shone in plain daylight at the moment of Kalākaua’s coronation was perceived by all those in attendance as a sign. Lili‘uokalani thus deploys the star as a metaphor to argue that her brother's kingship was consecrated both under Native Hawaiian and Christian traditions. In the Hawaiian spiritual tradition, stars were believed to be ancestors or deities, while in Christianity the Star of Bethlehem signaled the place where the Messiah was born.\textsuperscript{128} Thus, by remarking on how a single star illuminated the moment of her brother’s coronation, Lili‘uokalani draws on a symbol that has equal significance within each of the cultures she deployed it in. Eleven chapters later, Lili‘uokalani again deploys the two-way translation of Native Hawaiian and Christian symbols when she recalls Kalākaua’s coronation to the reader as she describes her attendance at Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in 1887.

In describing Queen Victoria’s deference to Hawaiian Queen Kapiolani, Kalākaua’s wife, and to herself, Lili‘uokalani notes how she, only a princess at that time,

\textsuperscript{127} Lili‘uokalani, \textit{Hawai‘i’s Story}, 103 (emphasis mine).

\textsuperscript{128} Hawaiian mythology scholar Martha Beckwith notes that “Stars were named and were associated with gods and chiefs.” See Beckwith, \textit{Hawaiian Mythology} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1970), 85.
was the only Native Hawaiian to be twice kissed on the forehead by the British monarch. First, she remarks on how Victoria twice exchanged kisses on the cheek with Queen Kapiolani, and then how “the Queen of England again kissed me on the forehead.”

This evokes the image of Lili‘uokalani being anointed by the most powerful monarch in the “civilized” world. Lili‘uokalani later reconnects the image of her own anointed forehead with that of Queen Victoria when she describes the moment of the religious service during the Jubilee celebrations:

Thus, the grand pageant of religious worship proceeded; and while uprose the prayers of the vast assembly, invoking the blessings of the Almighty upon the head of the great British Empire, a gleam of God's sunshine penetrated through one of the windows, and finding its way from the casement across the grand temple, illuminated with its radiance the bowed head of the royal worshipper. It was a beautiful emblem of divine favor, and reminded me of the coincidence of which mention has been made that occurred at the moment of the coronation of my brother in Hawaii.

The description of Queen Victoria twice kissing Lili‘uokalani on the forehead precedes the moment when, after the blessings of God have been invoked “upon the head” of the British Empire, a ray of "God's sunshine" illuminates "the bowed head" of the British sovereign. This connection of the heads of the British queen and her empire with Lili‘uokalani’s forehead suggests a relationship of power between the consecrated queens. By symbolically establishing her brother as a precedent for Victoria (as she expressly reminds the reader), and herself as anointed by Queen Victoria before she became her brother’s successor, Lili‘uokalani asserts the connection between the Native and the Christian metaphors of consecration and between the legitimacy of the

129 Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i’s Story, 145.
130 Ibid, 155 (emphasis mine).
indigenous Hawaiian and the British monarchies. Through this metaphorical link, she translates the legitimizing events during her brother’s ascension into the similar legitimizing event she describes during Queen Victoria’s Jubilee. The fact that she first describes her brother’s coronation and later relates it to the British queen’s celebration is significant because Lili‘uokalani uses the Hawaiian precedent as the legitimizing event rather than taking Queen Victoria as the authorizing example.

The “beautiful emblem of divine favor” and the “coincidence” connect the powers that authenticate both the British and Hawaiian monarchies. She thus places the divine favor bestowed upon her brother by ancestral Native Hawaiian traditions on the same footing as that bestowed by Christian traditions. Lili‘uokalani argues for her right to rule by drawing from both her own people’s spiritual legacy, as well as from that of the Christian God brought to Hawai‘i by U.S. missionaries in 1820. While Bott suggests that Lili‘uokalani only mimics or “self-fashions” in the image of Queen Victoria at her own peril, Lili‘uokalani actually indigenizes the transnational symbols of power connected to Queen Victoria’s rule to reveal the fissures and contradictions in her opponents’ arguments against her reign. To this end, Lili‘uokalani dialogically translates the ancestral symbols of power identified with her indigenous traditions into those that legitimize the British queen and those she identifies with the British monarchy into those that legitimize her brother and herself.
In the same way that Lili‘uokalani translates the legitimacy of her rule over Hawai‘i into the legitimacy of the British monarchy, she also argues throughout her autobiography for the validity and proven efficacy of constitutional monarchy as a system of government. She even suggests that monarchies have a better track record in securing the wellbeing of all people than fledgling republican democracies. In speaking about her brother King Kalākaua, Lili‘uokalani notes:

If he believed in the divine right of kings, and the distinction of hereditary nobility, it was not alone from the prejudices of birth and native custom, but because he was able to perceive that even the most enlightened nations of the earth have not as yet been able to replace [monarchy] with a ruling class equally able, patriotic, or disinterested. I say this with all reverence for the form of government and the social order existing in the United States…

In this passage, Lili‘uokalani raises a rhetorical question: Why, if “the most enlightened nations” (by which she means Britain) continue to value monarchy as its ruling system of government, does the United States have a problem with Hawai‘i? Lili‘uokalani’s “reverence” for the United States also does not prevent her from highlighting how the Hawaiian constitutional monarchy benefited both natives and non-natives alike, especially the minority “foreigners.” She contrasts this representation of beneficence for all, even at the cost of the Native monarchy itself, with the oppressed condition of racial minorities within the system of U.S. republican democracy, which she describes as “the great experiment of popular government.”

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131 Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i’s Story, 178.

132 Ibid, 310.
government, she notes, already suffers from a “race-problem,” a phrase she uses to describe the situation of African Americans in the United States.\textsuperscript{133}  

Lili‘uokalani also calls attention to how the Native Hawaiians under the U.S.-supported government are already “virtually relegated to the condition of the aborigines of the American continent.”\textsuperscript{134} The implication serves to remind the reader that these “aborigines,” or American Indian nations, were forcibly removed from their lands and onto reservations. The condition of these disenfranchised groups, Lili‘uokalani suggests, clearly tarnishes the U.S. democratic system. Thus, the queen warns her audience against adding Hawai‘i to “the social and political perplexities with which the United States. . .is already struggling.”\textsuperscript{135} Boldly, she asks: “And for what? . . . in order that a novel and inconsistent foreign and colonial policy shall be grafted into its hitherto impregnable diplomacy?”\textsuperscript{136} Colonialism, Lili‘uokalani cautions, has not been part of U.S. foreign policy and the annexation of Hawai‘i would create a problem, in the sense of producing a “grafted,” or indissoluble, and unavoidably troubled union. With this statement, Lili‘uokalani anticipates the eventual result of U.S. policy toward Hawai‘i in the twentieth century: its incorporation as a state and the further disenfranchisement of her people even as U.S. citizens.

\textsuperscript{133} Lili‘uokalani, \textit{Hawai‘i’s Story}, 310.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, 369.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 310.
\textsuperscript{136} Idem.
By challenging representations of republican democracy as a better system of government, Lili‘uokalani writes back against the dominant representations of Hawaiians as incapable of legitimately choosing their preferred form of government. The congressional report issued in 1895 after an investigation into the ousting of the queen noted that the self-styled U.S.-descended “reformers” primarily based their ambitions on their conviction that the “native is unfit for government and his power must be curtailed.” Contradicting such dominant representations of the Native Hawaiians, Lili‘uokalani argues that the biggest mistake made by the natives was to place their full trust in the non-natives, who claimed to be their friends and allies. In the chapter titled “The Bayonet Constitution,” Lili‘uokalani recounts the moment in 1887 when King Kalākaua was stripped of his powers by U.S. descendants:

> It may be true that they [the whites or haoles] really believed us unfit to be trusted to administer the growing wealth of the Islands in a safe and proper way. But if we manifested any incompetency, it was in not foreseeing that they would be bound by no obligations, by honor, or by oath of allegiance, should an opportunity arise for seizing our country, and bringing it under the authority of the United States.

Lili‘uokalani thus argues that it was not an inability of the Native Hawaiians to govern themselves but their inability to glean the imperialist motivations of the haoles that paved the way for the successful colonization of Hawai‘i. In this way, she contradicts accounts by Euroamerican historians and haoles who blamed the “ineffectual” and “corrupt”

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138 Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i’s Story, 178.
Native monarchy for the impetus toward annexing Hawaii to the United States.\textsuperscript{139} Lili‘uokalani further points to an "incompetency" on the part of the Native Hawaiians in translating the actions of the *haoles* into terms like opportunism, treason and betrayal. Lili‘uokalani suggests that such an act of translation would have allowed the Natives to foresee the annexationists' motivations before it was too late to stop them.

Lili‘uokalani’s pro-monarchy argument also was anchored in the belief that the monarchical system was the only safeguard against annexation to the United States. Based both on “ancient custom and the authority of island chiefs,” she argues, the monarchy was “the sole guaranty of [Hawaiian] nationality.”\textsuperscript{140} In light of this, she dismisses criticism of her brother Kalākaua’s expensive coronation by representing the event as having “a serious purpose of national importance,” and being a “wise and patriotic” act aimed at awakening “in the people a national pride.” Further, the queen argues that “those among us who did not desire to have Hawaii remain a nation would look on an expenditure of this kind as worse than wasted.”\textsuperscript{141} In acknowledging the need to “awaken” a dormant sense of national pride among the Native Hawaiians, Lili‘uokalani defends monarchical pageantry as a way to strengthen the national imaginary. Just as monarchy and nation were intrinsically tied in Britain, Lili‘uokalani

\textsuperscript{139} Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 165-166. Silva discusses how Euroamerican historians “have relied on English-language newspaper accounts of the coup and the struggle over annexation” as well as on the memoirs of the American-descended leaders of the coup. “The English-language papers minimized the resistance to annexation, actively campaigned against the queen, and, at their worst, ridiculed her.” Further, Silva notes how historians portrayed Lili‘uokalani as “an autocratic, ineffective monarch.”

\textsuperscript{140} Lili‘uokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story*, 169.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, 105.
argues that the Hawaiian monarchical system of government was inextricably linked to Hawai‘i’s existence as a sovereign nation.142

In revising Euroamerican representations of the Hawaiians and of their monarchical government through indigenized translation, Lili‘uokalani provides a counterpoint to the dominant description of Native rule as a feudal system under which "the abundance of the chief was procured by the poverty of his followers."143 As a counterpoint to Twain’s descriptions of the monarchy, Lili‘uokalani states that the poverty of any of the chief's "retainers" would have reflected poorly on the chief and argues that in her own father's chiefdom there "was food enough and to spare for everyone."144 Lili‘uokalani contrasts that picture of wellbeing and abundance under the Native chiefs with the "homeless condition of the Hawaiian people at the present day" under the haole-led government. In the past, she writes, lands were apportioned to each Hawaiian "and on these allotments were raised the taro, the potatoes, the pigs, and the chickens which constituted the living of the family."145 Lili‘uokalani thus establishes an opposition between the destitute present of Hawaiians and their prosperous past under the Native chiefs.

The references to the Native-grown root vegetables and the farm animals further conjure images of an agrarian and egalitarian past, when everyone had land to live on and

142 Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, 257. Osorio argues that the Hawaiian kingdom, “despite its inability or unwillingness to promote the economic status of Natives, nevertheless was deeply meaningful as a symbol of their survival as a distinct and unique people.”

143 Lili‘uokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story*, 3.

144 Idem.

145 Idem.
enough to eat. In choosing the elements of the Native diet to translate, however, Lili‘uokalani omits mention of dogs, which as Twain indicated, were also raised and eaten by the Native Hawaiians alongside the pigs and chickens. Given that she was keenly aware that Euroamericans perceived the eating of dogs as “savage,” Lili‘uokalani’s silence about that practice reflects her careful construction and translation of the Native Hawaiian past in terms that not only fostered comprehension but also identification from her U.S. audience. This evident silence is significant because dog-eating was part of the dominant representation of Hawaiians that Lili‘uokalani contested in her memoir. Thus, its absence from her reminiscences about a pre-European-contact Hawai‘i shows how Lili‘uokalani recreates that time period in ways that resonate more with the Europeanized ideal of an agrarian and egalitarian society.\footnote{Allen, \textit{The Betrayal}, 366. Allen writes that U.S. news accounts of a luau held for Lili‘uokalani in August 1898, upon annexation, claimed that dog meat had been served. Allen rebuts: “Dog meat had not been eaten in a royal luau in over a hundred years.”} Lili‘uokalani’s translation of the Hawaiian past is in complete opposition to the one-sided savage and heathenish portrayal drawn by Twain.

Also as a counterpoint to Twain, Lili‘uokalani translates the history of Hawai‘i into one of prosperity under a pre-capitalist system under which no one owned but everyone cared for the land. In this system, Lili‘uokalani argues, the Native chiefs provided for their people and the people provided for their chiefs. As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Lili‘uokalani argues that “under our own system in former days there was always plenty for prince or for people.”\footnote{Lili‘uokalani, \textit{Hawai‘i’s Story}, 24.} She begins the passage by stressing how she has “always said” that the Native Hawaiians’ “own system in former
“days” worked well in caring for the people to re-state the opposition between the past under the Native monarchy and the present under the haole-led republican government. At the same time, this re-statement calls the reader’s attention to her role as a long-standing defender of Native Hawaiian interests. In highly evocative language and through the use of alliteration (“plenty for prince or for people”), Lili’uokalani underlines the reciprocity and the balance between the Native kings and their subjects, who each cared for the other in their own appointed way. She notes that the people were not paid for their work, but that they also were not taxed, clearly differentiating the Native Hawaiians from feudal serfs. Lili’uokalani contradicts Euroamerican portrayals of the Hawaiian monarchs as cruel and exploitative by challenging colonial translations of the Native-led past as exploitative and enslaving.

Lili’uokalani notes that not only was the Native economy one that provided for all, but also that Hawai’i became a constitutional monarchy half a century before the haoles took over the government. The first constitution in Hawai’i, she argues, was instituted in 1840, and the second in 1864 by Kamehameha V, "under which Hawaii was happily ruled for twenty-three years.”

Lili’uokalani states:

There will be no disputing the fact that this was a period of increasing prosperity; yet until the late King Kalākaua was constrained by the foreign element to abrogate this constitution . . . all parties had lived together in harmony throughout the kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands, under a constitution devised and promulgated by one man, and he of the race of the Hawaiian chiefs . . . Let it be repeated: the promulgation of a new constitution, adapted to the needs of the times and the demands of the people, has been an indisputable prerogative of the Hawaiian monarchy.

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148 Lili’uokalani, Hawai’i’s Story, 21.

149 Ibid.
With her royal exhortation “Let it be repeated,” Liliʻuokalani commands her U.S. audience to note that the Hawaiian Islands were ruled under a Native constitution for several decades before the "foreign element" bayoneted-in their own. Also, she uses the term “of the race of the Hawaiian chiefs” to call attention to the fact that the first constitution was produced by the Native rulers, not by the Euroamericans who represented the monarchy as ineffectual and tyrannical. In keeping with her rhetorical strategy of translating the constitutional monarchy into terms easily understood by her audience, Liliʻuokalani remarks that the passage of a constitution was “an indisputable prerogative of the Hawaiian monarchy.” In this way, Liliʻuokalani demarcates the difference between the Native constitutional monarchy and her audience’s constitutionally governed democracy, in which the legislative branch ostensibly has the “undisputable prerogative” to promulgate a constitution.

Liliʻuokalani also uses this point to explain why she attempted to abrogate the 1887 Bayonet Constitution and promulgate a new document that would no longer discriminate against Native Hawaiians. In explaining that she received a petition signed by thousands of Native Hawaiians demanding a new constitution, Liliʻuokalani states, “To have ignored or disregarded so general a request I must have been deaf to the voice of the people, which tradition tells us is the voice of God.” But to what tradition is Liliʻuokalani referring here? Is it the tradition of the divine and absolute right of monarchs to rule the people or is it the democratic tradition that vests the people with the

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150 Liliʻuokalani, Hawaiʻi’s Story, 213.
ultimate word of how they will be governed? Lili’uokalani suggests that, in the case of the Hawaiian government, monarchy and people are one and the same. Her attempt to promulgate a popularly demanded constitution, which she suggests was her God-given right and obligation, became the main reason given by the “reformers” for the coup staged against her government. By connecting the two kinds of democratically influenced governments in ways that highlight the similarities within their essential difference, Lili’uokalani argues that both constitutionally ruled systems – the U.S. American and the Hawaiian – are equally valid.

In addition to claims that the Native Hawaiians could not govern themselves, Lili’uokalani was well aware that the U.S.-descended haoles who wrested power from her legitimized their cause by projecting the discourses of savagism onto the Hawaiian monarchy. In her final chapter, titled “Hawaiian Autonomy,” she states:

It has been said that the Hawaiian people under the rule of the chiefs were most degraded, that under the monarchy their condition greatly improved, but that the native government in any form had at last become intolerable to the more enlightened part of the community . . . I shall not examine [this statement] in detail; but it may serve as a text for the few remarks I feel called upon to make from my own – and that is to say, the native Hawaiian – standpoint.

Lili’uokalani first notes that, “It has been said,” without identifying who is doing the saying. This introductory statement contrasts with the passage mentioned before in which Lili’uokalani identifies herself as having “always said” that the Natives' wellbeing

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151 Kualapai, “The Queen Writes Back,” 38. Even as an envoy from President Grover Cleveland attempted to negotiate with Lili’uokalani for a possible restoration in 1894, she refused to accept the Bayonet Constitution. Eventually, realizing that this was the only way to secure her reinstatement, Lili’uokalani agreed.

152 Lili’uokalani, Hawai’i’s Story, 366 (emphasis mine).
was well secured under their chosen form of government. By describing what “has been said” as “it,” Lili’uokalani establishes a clear rhetorical distance from such statements, implying her disagreement from the very start. She then builds her argument by setting up a series of oppositions – chiefs/monarchy, degraded/improved, native government/enlightened community – that support her defense of the Native monarchy and viewpoint. Further, the queen tells her reader that she will not directly address the belief that the monarchy had become “intolerable,” thereby *de facto* dismissing the dominant argument against her while at the same time turning it into a pulpit from which she can advocate her own cause.

Highlighting her status as a Native Hawaiian, Lili’uokalani proposes that she is not simply presenting another side in a debate dominated by U.S.-descended *haoles*. Her indigenous standpoint, Lili’uokalani argues, gives her pre-eminent standing in the rhetorical battleground precisely because it is Native. Both her implicit and explicit identities as Native sovereign translate her into the representative symbol of her nation and invest her with the standing to tell her and her nation’s story as one and the same. Her autobiography’s title, *Hawai’i’s Story by Hawai’i’s Queen*, clearly highlights the connection between the nation and the monarchy and is especially telling because she published her book at a time when she was no longer queen. It is her “own . . . native Hawaiian . . . standpoint” that universalizes her into a symbol of the Hawaiian nation and as a challenge to U.S. imperialism. In using indigenized translation to translate the Native Hawaiian and the Euroamerican into each other simultaneously, without
positioning the latter as superior to the former, Lili‘uokalani proposes her own
counterpoints in defense of monarchical rule and of her nation’s right to sovereignty.

**Culture**

Just as she positions the Hawaiian monarchy as being on equal footing with U.S.
democracy, Lili‘uokalani also highlights elements of Native culture that she believes
deserve the same consideration. I focus here on Lili‘uokalani’s discussion of the Native
Hawaiian practice of *hānai*, translated loosely as adoption, as a telling example of her
indigenized translation. Unlike traditional Euroamerican autobiographies that start the
story of the self at the moment of birth, Lili‘uokalani begins her story by situating her
birth in relation to the site where she was born on September 2, 1838. Lili‘uokalani states
that her birth site was “very near” the “extinct crater or mountain which forms the
background to the city of Honolulu . . . known as the Punch-Bowl.”153 The deployment
of indigenized translation is evident in the very first sentence of the autobiography when
Lili‘uokalani refers to the crater by using its common Euroamerican term of the “punch
bowl,” which conjures the image of a large glass bowl generally used during celebrations.
Her use of the Euroamerican term signals Lili‘uokalani’s understanding of the two-way
context in which she is writing. The Hawaiian queen then describes the volcano’s crater,
simultaneously identifying the site of her birth in both indigenous and Euroamerican
ways. In that sentence, Lili‘uokalani locates her own nascent body in relation to the
indigenous body of the land, specifically to the extinct volcano, which created the land

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153 Lili‘uokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story*, 1.
that frames or “forms the background of” the capital city. In this way, Lili‘uokalani
deploys indigenized translation by describing her birth as significant in both
Euroamerican and Native cultural contexts.

Similar to how she draws on both indigenous and Euroamerican concepts to
describe her birth, Lili‘uokalani describes the connections of her family to Hawaiian
national history. Her mother, Lili‘uokalani says, “was one of the fifteen counselors of the
king, Kamehameha III, who in 1840 gave the first written constitution to the Hawaiian
people.”¹⁵⁴ Her great-grandfather was “the founder of the dynasty of the Kamehamehas,”
and her great-grandaunt was “the celebrated Queen Kapiolani, one of the first converts to
Christianity.”¹⁵⁵ These passages show how Lili‘uokalani structures her autobiography on
Hawaiian concepts of genealogy and ancestral relationship to the land.¹⁵⁶ Further, they
show that Lili‘uokalani begins her rhetorical attempt to "present the Hawaiian monarchy
as a stable, autonomous government capably managing the affairs and problems of a
flourishing nation," by drawing on indigenous cultural concepts that mark "her
genealogical relationship with the earth."¹⁵⁷ I argue, however, that Lili‘uokalani not only
indigenizes the form of her text but also deploys Euroamerican concepts as part of her
rhetorical act of indigenized translation. Clearly, Lili‘uokalani positions herself as linked
simultaneously to the indigenous body of the nation (the volcanic land) and to

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.
¹⁵⁵ Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i’s Story, 1.
¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 49, 51.
transnational Euroamerican symbols of civilization, such as constitutional government, dynastic monarchy, and Christianity.

Lili’uokalani’s effort to connect herself both to the land and to the Hawaiian dynasty of the Kamehamehas was quite deliberate. Born Lili Kamakaeha, Lili’uokalani was the biological child of a high chief but she was not related by blood to the Kamehamehas. In keeping with Hawaiian tradition, she became hānai, or foster child, to the granddaughter of Kamehameha I, thereby advancing in rank to become a member of the royal family. Unlike Euroamerican adoption or foster relations, which establish a legal relationship between parent and child, the hānai tradition in Hawaiian culture went much farther, establishing an indissoluble and almost literal blood relation between Liliu and the Kamehamehas, which enabled her to vie for the throne. Kamehameha I, known as “The Great,” united the Hawaiian Islands through conquest in 1795, ending years of war among island chiefs. Becoming a Kamehameha assured that Liliu was raised in the traditional way of the Ali‘i, or the Hawaiian ruling families, and that she would be raised steeped in Hawaiian cultural traditions and language.

Lili‘uokalani’s method of indigenized translation, which engages both the linguistic and cultural aspects of the clash between different worldviews in a colonial context, is especially evident when she explains the Hawaiian system of hānai. Literally translated as “to feed,” hānai was a system through which Hawaiian chiefs "adopted"

158 Allen, The Betrayal, 37.

159 Osorio, Dismembering Lāhui, 2. Osorio explains that the Ali‘i were the families that originally belonged to the House of Nobles under the kingdom’s first constitution. Their rank was equal to that of the “akua (gods)” and generally could “trace their chiefly genealogies back for a hundred generations.”
Lili’uokalani credits hānai with maintaining the Hawaiian nation as a harmonious whole. In her text, Lili'uokalani uses the term "foster sister" to describe the daughter of the high chief who adopted her, and then states:

In speaking of our relationship, I have adopted the term customarily used in the English language, but there was no such modification recognized in my native land. I knew no other father or mother than my foster-parents . . . This was, and indeed is, in accordance with Hawaiian customs. It is not easy to explain its origins to those alien to our national life, but it seems perfectly natural to us. As intelligible a reason as can be given is that this alliance by adoption cemented the ties of friendship between the chiefs. It spread to the common people, and it has doubtless fostered a community of interest and harmony.161

Lili’uokalani neatly articulates the opposition between the “natural” practices of her “native land,” and the perception of these practices as “unintelligible” by “those alien to our national life.” This tension between Native Hawaiian culture and its translation and interpretation by Euroamericans is evident throughout Lili’uokalani’s entire text. Lili’uokalani’s rhetorical response to the tension between colonial and cultural translations is to engage in indigenized translation.

The passage above highlights Lili’uokalani’s self-fashioning as the one who, through cultural translation, could mediate between opposite indigenous and Euroamerican worldviews. Even as she recognizes the limits of translation, noting how such concepts as hānai cannot be perfectly rendered in Euroamerican terms, she proposes that such cultural concepts can still be understood through the process of translation.

Lili’uokalani thus rejects any reification of the Euroamerican over the Native Hawaiian as

160 Osorio, Dismembering Lāhui, 290.
161 Lili’uokalani, Hawai’i’s Story, 4.
she acknowledges the cultural divide that sometimes makes literal or one-way translation impossible. Still, she is well aware that it is only through translation that different worldviews can find common ground. Lili’uokalani writes that while words like "adopted" and "foster" were used in English to describe the relationship through which high chiefs "adopted" each others' children, "no such modification [was] recognized in my native land."\textsuperscript{162} In this way, Lili’uokalani suggests that the Euroamerican relationships created through adoption and foster care, the "modifications" to the parent-child bond, were in fact inferior to the links promoted through hānai.\textsuperscript{163}

In acknowledging the limitations of translation, Lili’uokalani challenges her audience by turning adoption and fostering into synonyms, although they actually are not so in Euroamerican legal systems. Lili'uokalani uses the words "I have adopted" to describe her own decision to translate hānai into these terms. But while adoption is implicitly permanent, fostering is explicitly not. Further, while Euroamerican adoption is generally secret and there tends to be a stigma associated to being adopted, the Hawaiian practice was public and bore no stigma at all. By using these related yet different words to explain the system of hānai, Lili’uokalani suggests that unlike adoption and fostering, which remain at the familial level in Euroamerican culture, the system of hānai was expressly designed to grow and maintain a harmonious national whole. Through

\textsuperscript{162} Lili’uokalani, Hawai'i's Story, 5.

\textsuperscript{163} Kualapai, “The Queen Writes Back,” 51. Kualapai argues that in this passage Lili'uokalani acknowledges that "the deepest Hawaiian cultural concepts and practices—in this case, the traditional practice of hānai—cannot be carried by English language." For Kualapai, this passage "establishes a complex rhetorical relationship with her audience" based simultaneously on making "clear that the memoir will be narrated through a Hawaiian point of view," marking "a rhetorical gap separating her ‘alien’ audience from the possessive Hawaiian narrator signified in our national life," and on establishing "the fact that culturally she knows her audience far better than her audience knows her.”
indigenized translation, by making adoption and fostering synonyms of hānai, Liliʻuokalani fashions her text as an expression of this Native system, or as a way to “cement the ties” between herself and her audience with the future of the Hawaiian nation's wellbeing in mind. Not only does Liliʻuokalani’s discussion of hānai encapsulate the oppositions that concern much of her text, but her choice of how to translate hānai shows her willingness and ability to use any available rhetorical means to defend and maintain her nation's sovereignty.

**Religion**

In addition to deploying indigenized translation to render important aspects of Hawaiian culture for her U.S. audience, Liliʻuokalani used it to challenge U.S. claims against her reign by re-recognizing or refashioning the rhetoric of “the good Christian” for her own purposes. Portraying herself as “a martyr to the cause of my people,” Liliʻuokalani translates the Christian rhetoric of martyrdom into the defense of the Hawaiian nation's sovereignty. By translating herself into a martyr, Liliʻuokalani not only suggests her innocence but also her endurance of suffering for a Christian cause. In contrast, Liliʻuokalani repeatedly refers to her non-native deposees as "Christian (?)" or “(Christian?)” to highlight the difference between her demonstrably Christian behavior and sacrifice and the un-Christian and hypocritical actions of those who usurped her throne. With barely veiled sarcasm, Liliʻuokalani addresses one of the charges against her – that she wanted to implement a lottery to raise funds for the government – by noting

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164 Liliʻuokalani, Hawaiʻi’s Story, 279.
how lotteries “are not native productions of my country, but introduced into our ‘heathen’ land by so-called Christians, from a Christian nation, who have erected monuments, universities and legislative halls by that method.”

Unlike Twain’s satire of the missionary work, which ultimately serves to undermine the Hawaiian ethos, Lili‘uokalani utilizes sarcasm to reveal the hypocrisy of the missionaries. This hypocritical behavior, Lili‘uokalani implies, is evident in the fact that although U.S. Americans lambasted her for considering a lottery, such “so-called Christians” and their nation had long benefited from and financed important social institutions through that system.

Lili‘uokalani also charges the leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Hawai‘i, which was her own church, with hypocritical behavior. Describing the events after her arrest as a result of the 1895 revolt, Lili‘uokalani writes:

> although I had been a regular attendant on the Presbyterian worship since my childhood, a constant contributor to all the missionary societies, and had helped to build their churches and ornament the walls, giving my time and my musical ability freely to make their meetings attractive to my people, yet none of these pious church members or clergymen remembered me in my prison.

In this passage, Lili‘uokalani again establishes herself as an able translator who indigenized church meetings by decorating the church and contributing her music, to help the Presbyterian missionaries "make their meetings attractive to my people."

Lili‘uokalani thus represents herself as a significant contributtor to the Presbyterians' missionary work in Hawai‘i, in turn calling attention to the difference between her own

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165 Lili‘uokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story*, 240.

166 Ibid, 269.
willing cooperation with the missionaries and the utter lack of compassion of “these pious church members” in her hour of need.

This contrast resurfaces when Lili'uokalani recounts the kindness she received from the Anglican Bishop in Honolulu and from Catholic nuns, but not from her U.S. Protestant jailers. Lili'uokalani writes:

Although my Christian (?) jailers denied to me their sacred ministration and actual presence, yet none the less were these good and true Christians there in the loving token of kind remembrance, and in the spirit of the Divine Lord, during my bondage. 167

Lili’uokalani thus makes both typographical and linguistic distinctions, casting herself authoritatively as belonging among the "true Christians" because she can tell who is and who is not true to the faith. Lili’uokalani refashions Christian rhetoric to turn the rhetorical tables so that she, the Native Hawaiian, is a truer Christian than the U.S. missionaries and their descendants. Further, by using the word “bondage” (rather than stating “during my imprisonment” or “my time in jail”), Lili’uokalani recalls for her Christian readers the “bondage” of the Hebrews under the Egyptians, or the oppression of one nation under another more powerful and repressive one.

The queen also connects Christian rhetoric to the rhetoric of U.S. democracy in her effort to highlight the inherent contradiction between democracy and imperialism. In her final chapter, Lili'uokalani wonders:

Is the American Republic of States to degenerate, and become a colonizer and a land-grabber? And is this prospect satisfactory to a people who rely upon self-government for their liberties, and whose guaranty of liberty and autonomy to the whole western hemisphere, the grand Monroe doctrine,

167 Lili’uokalani, Hawai‘i’s Story, 293.
appealing to the respect and the sense of justice of the masses of every
nation on earth, has made any attack upon it practically impossible to the
statesmen and rulers of armed empires? \(^{168}\)

Working again with the juxtaposition of opposites (degenerate/colonizer/land-grabber
versus self-government/liberty/autonomy) Lili‘uokalani turns the rhetorical tables against
the United States. She calls her readers' attention to how the Monroe Doctrine of 1823,
which seemed to promise protection to smaller nations against "armed empires," is in
direct contradiction with the actions of the United States as "a colonizer and a land-
grabber." \(^{169}\) Lili‘uokalani adds:

There is little question but that the United States could become a
successful rival of the European nations in the race for conquest, and
could create a vast military and naval power, if such is its ambition. But is
such an ambition laudable? Is such a departure from its established
principles patriotic or politic? \(^{170}\)

In anticipating the rise of the U.S. as an empire in the Pacific, Lili‘uokalani knows that
she has asked a rhetorical question. But she hopes that it is a question that will shake up
her readers and make them realize that democracy and colonialism are essentially and
irrevocably at odds with one another.

Lili‘uokalani follows this rhetorical question and concludes her autobiography
with a translation of the Native Hawaiian struggle for sovereignty into the biblical story
of Naboth, who refuses King Ahab’s offer to purchase his vineyard because it also is

\(^{168}\) Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i's Story, 372.

\(^{169}\) See Murphy, Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire, 4-6.
As I discussed in Chapter 1, in December 1823, President James Monroe issued a caution to European
powers that "the American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future
colonization by any European powers" and that the United States would "consider any attempt [by the Old
World] to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety."

\(^{170}\) Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i's Story, 372.
Naboth’s ancestral land. Once Naboth is conveniently killed, King Ahab takes possession of the vineyard and is then punished by God, who curses his descendants. Her conclusion is both an anti-imperialist appeal and an admonition to her U.S. readers:

Oh, honest Americans, as Christians hear me for my down-trodden people! Their form of government is as dear to them as yours is precious to you. Quite as warmly as you love your country, so they love theirs. With all your goodly possessions, . . . do not covet the little vineyard of Naboth’s, so far from your shores, lest the punishment of Ahab fall upon you, if not in your day, in that of your children, for ‘be not deceived, God is not mocked.’

By requesting that her audience “hear” her plea on behalf of her oppressed people, Lili‘uokalani establishes herself as the advocate of the Native Hawaiians’ right to self-determination. Simultaneously, Lili‘uokalani again defends the constitutional monarchy by arguing that monarchy is as inherent to the Native Hawaiian culture as republican democracy is to U.S. culture. Lili‘uokalani thereby translates the main cultural paradigms of democratic liberty on which the U.S. American ethos is established – a government chosen by the people – into the Native Hawaiian ethos.

By casting the United States in the role of King Ahab, a covetous and corrupt monarch, and herself as the faithful Naboth, Lili‘uokalani further translates the United States into a symbol of oppressive power. Like Naboth, Lili‘uokalani suggests, she was unfairly ousted so that the United States could take over Hawai‘i even though her monarchy was supported by the Native Hawaiians. Lili‘uokalani’s cultural translation suggests to the reader that a republican democracy has contradictorily trodden upon the rights of self-determination of an indigenous people whose preferred form of government

171 Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i’s Story, 373-4.
is a constitutional monarchy. Further, Lili‘uokalani suggests that the favor of God, who will not be “mocked,” is with those who are truly Christian, not Christians in name only. Lili‘uokalani apostrophizes her readers as “honest Americans” and as Christians, establishing an opposition between her intended audience and the U.S. Americans who helped depose her, whom she portrays throughout her text as hypocritical and un-Christian. Lili‘uokalani positions herself as a righteous queen advocating for her nation’s and her people’s democratic rights against a rising U.S. empire in the Pacific. Lili‘uokalani’s translation of the Native Hawaiians as better Christians also acted as a rhetorical challenge to late nineteenth-century Euroamerican representations of Hawaiians as “heathens,” such as Twain’s, which persisted even after Native Hawaiians had long been Christianized.

Just as she deploys the transnational symbols of the British Empire to establish her own monarchy’s right to rule, Lili‘uokalani deploys Christian rhetoric to set herself and her people as the "true" Christians – humble, trusting, and truthful. She wants her audience to compare her representation of Christianity to the U.S.-descended missionaries and their allies who not only illegally deposed her reign but who also treated her with less than Christian charity once she was ousted. Lili‘uokalani’s final sentence conjures the fear of divine retribution against an imperial United States: “As they deal with me and my people, kindly, generously, and justly, so may the Great Ruler of all

172 Kualapai, “The Queen Writes Back,” 49. Kualapai argues that it is significant that although Queen Lili‘uokalani is no longer queen of Hawai‘i when she writes her autobiography in 1897, she “gives notice [to her readers] that the author is not the ‘ex-queen’ but ‘Hawai‘i’s Queen Lili‘uokalani.”
nations deal with the grand and glorious nation of the United States of America.”

Lili‘uokalani suggests that neither she nor her people have been treated with the kindness, generosity or justice that would be expected of the "grand and glorious nation of the United States of America." She also cautions that “the Great Ruler of all nations” will take the side of her oppressed people and not of those who are Christian in name only.

**Translating Cultures in the U.S. Colonial Context**

By the time the United States entered World War I in 1917 and began its steady climb toward becoming a world empire in the twentieth century, Lili‘uokalani was an elderly queen who would never see her hope of being reinstated realized. In conversations with her hānai, Lydia K. Aholo, Lili‘uokalani reportedly described the loss of her kingdom as "a small thing . . . a symptom of the disease abroad in the land and thus . . . inevitable." The “disease” was U.S. imperialism and Lili‘uokalani came to see Hawai‘i as its unavoidable victim. Shortly before her death in November 1917, Lili‘uokalani instructed Aholo to tell her "true and complete story." "My story is a universal one," Lili‘uokalani said. "The same betrayal of all peoples can happen if 'they' do not understand." Based on her interviews with Aholo, Lili‘uokalani’s biographer, Helena K. Allen, relates how in her dying days the former queen was often tormented by her inability to stop the wave of annexation that swept away her nation. At those

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173 Lili‘uokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story*, 374.

174 See Allen, *The Betrayal*, 391. These quotes of Lili‘uokalani come from statements made by her hanai daughter, Lydia K. Aholo, and included in Lili‘uokalani’s biography.

175 Ibid, 17.
moments, Lili’uokalani repeatedly asked, “What have I done that was so wrong that I should lose my country for my people?” While Lili’uokalani’s anti-imperialist effort failed, her autobiography still stands as a denunciation of the events that led to the illegal annexation of Hawai’i to the United States. The text exists as a material witness of the “generative imperialisms” that fueled the U.S. nation-building mission of becoming an empire and which led the United States to become a colonial power at the end of the nineteenth century. Lili’uokalani’s autobiography endures as the chronicle of a queen whose indigenized translations advocated for the democratic rights of self-determination of a colonized people against the imperialist covetousness of the United States of America.

Today, Lili’uokalani’s story has not yet become universal. Instead, and in keeping with Twain’s anticipation of Hawai’i as “the hottest corner of the earth,” many U.S. Americans see Hawai’i as a readily available and deserved paradise. Most perceive the islands as a “sweet and sunny land of palm trees and ‘hulahula’ girls,” and most are ignorant of the history of how and why Lili’uokalani was overthrown to pave the way for annexation and eventual statehood. In contrast, thousands of Native Hawaiians argue that their status as an indigenous people remains unresolved and basically unattended to by the United States more than a century after the last indigenous Hawaiian

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176 Allen, The Betrayal, 391.


178 Trask, From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai’i (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 2
monarch was illegally overthrown by U.S.-descended “revolutionaries” with the help of U.S. Marines. Activists of Native Hawaiian sovereignty, such as indigenous scholar and author Haunani-Kay Trask, criticize such long-standing representations of the Hawaiian Islands as “a predatory view” of the “Native land and culture.” In arguing that Native Hawaiians are not “happy natives,” Trask reminds us that the indigenous population marked the centennial of the 1898 annexation “with mass arrests and demonstrations against the denial of our human right to self-determination.”

The ongoing struggle for sovereignty of the indigenous people of Hawai‘i provides the historical context that invests Lili‘uokalani’s text with its ongoing significance in U.S. American literary studies.

Given the current and long-standing colonial entanglements of the United States, which this dissertation has highlighted, the juxtaposition examined in this chapter between Twain and Queen Lili‘uokalani provides an important contrapuntal reading of the literary genealogies of U.S. imperialism. Further, this contrapuntal reading also suggests that translation in colonial contexts cannot, and should not, be understood simply in linguistic terms. Kaplan proposes that Twain “translates Hawaiian culture and society into a racialized American idiom that does not remain stable and unilinear, but

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179 In November 1993, the U.S. Congress approved Public Law 103-150, “on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii on January 17, 1893, [and] acknowledge[d] the historical significance of this event which resulted in the suppression of the inherent sovereignty of the Native Hawaiian people.” Senate Reports 103-125 (Select Comm. on Indian Affairs), Congressional Record, Vol. 139 (1993).

180 Trask, From a Native Daughter, 2.
unleashes echoes of counter-translations that Twain himself cannot understand." By
definition, Twain’s translation is unstable because it is a one-way translation in the
service of colonialism, drawing on dominant representations of the Native Hawaiians to
fuel its satire. In counterpoint, Lili’uokalani’s indigenized translation moves beyond
remaining at the stage of being a reactive counter-translation to the centuries-long
renderings of Hawai’i. Lili’uokalani’s form of cultural translation, which privileges the
indigenous, promotes its own form of knowledge through a multi-faceted translation that
renders not only her own culture but also British and U.S. culture in her own terms.

Traditional cultural translation, Asad argues, “is inevitably enmeshed in conditions of
power,” including “the authority of ethnographers to uncover the implicit meanings of
subordinate societies.” I argue that the type of cultural translation engaged in by
Lili’uokalani is likewise invested with power because the “subordinate” individual
invests herself with the authority to propose alternative, implicit meanings for dominant
societies. By positioning the Native Hawaiians as better exponents of democratic
principles and of Christianity than her ostensibly democratic and Christian opponents,
Lili’uokalani exercised discursive power through her own brand of cultural translation.

In rendering the dominant culture from her indigenous viewpoint, Lili’uokalani
exercised the power of meaning-making, which is usually thought to remain with those
who have the upper hand in the colonial process of creating and promoting knowledge.

Notwithstanding Lili’uokalani’s important role as a cultural translator within her

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182 Asad, “The Concept of Cultural Translation,” 163.
historical moment, a major difference in the exercise of power between Twain and Lili’uokalani remains largely unaltered today. While Twain’s writings on Hawai’i have been and continue to be studied as part of the canon of nineteenth-century U.S. literary studies, Lili’uokalani’s text is still largely relegated to specialized studies. But as this transcolonial section of the dissertation has shown, to achieve a clearer understanding of the dynamics of empire, we must examine the many sides of the imperial and colonial equations in the late nineteenth-century, including those relating to the United States. Lili’uokalani’s text, therefore, deserves to be included as a necessary counterpoint in any study of Twain’s writings on Hawai’i.

Although he did initially support Hawai’i’s annexation, and represented himself as a raging imperialist, Twain became a vocal anti-imperialist after 1898, especially after the Philippine-American War began. In the following conclusion to the dissertation, I examine Ambrose Bierce’s representations of the Filipinos during that war, as well as Twain’s most famous anti-imperialist essay, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness.” What the conclusion shows, ultimately, is that the colonial visions that I first identified in this study, in the writings of U.S. writers in the 1830s, along with the transcolonial revisions that are identifiable in the late nineteenth-century, take on additional and intriguing characteristics as the United States, the Pacific and the Americas were ushered into the twentieth century.
CONCLUSION
BEYOND 1898

In this dissertation, I have argued for a re-periodization of 1898 as the initial moment of U.S. empire, specifically for one that moves this symbolic landmark several decades back. Instead of following scholars who have proposed the marker of 1848, when the United States acquired half the territory of Mexico, I have identified 1830 as a more accurate starting point of a so-called American Empire. As I discussed in the Introduction, that was the year when the United States launched a national, federally mandated campaign to remove American Indian nations from their lands east of the Mississippi. That this intra-continental imperialism has been largely naturalized under the benign-sounding rubric of “expansionism” makes the re-periodization of 1898 not only necessary, but also urgent, if we are truly to post-nationalize and de-center the field of U.S. literary studies.

In proposing 1830 as the more accurate signpost for the beginning of U.S. imperialism, this dissertation also has argued that the nation’s intra-continental imperialism coincided with an extra-continental incursion of U.S. economic influence into the Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico and Cuba. In the same way that intra-continental imperialism cemented the expanse and power of the U.S. nation, what
historians have described as the early U.S. economic colonialism in the Spanish Caribbean initially paved the way, and later largely justified, the late-century U.S. military and political dominance of those islands as a result of the Spanish-American War. The growing economic power of the United States in the Spanish Caribbean between the 1830s and 1890s placed Puerto Rico and Cuba between the rock of Spanish colonialism and the hard place of a rising U.S. empire. The position of being “torn between empires,” as Luis Martínez Fernández has described it, was not unique to the Americas, but was a key defining historical context for writers in that region, as well as around the globe.

This study has discussed how U.S. colonial desire for Puerto Rico and Cuba, in evidence since the inception of the nation, was articulated in colonial letters written by members of the intellectual elite of New England. Specifically, I have shown how Edward Bliss Emerson, Charles Chauncy Emerson, Sophia Amelia Peabody and Mary Tyler Peabody participated in, benefited from, and crafted colonial and anti-colonial representations directly related to the early U.S. economic expansion into the Spanish Caribbean between 1831 and 1835. In examining the extra-continental colonial visions articulated by these U.S. writers, not only in private letters but also in public lectures and novels, I have identified specific and fledgling discursive patterns deployed in the 1830s to represent a rising U.S. empire in relation to the geopolitical locations and peoples of Puerto Rico and Cuba. These colonial visions developed further throughout the nineteenth century, and were deployed widely in later decades when several waning and rising empires competed for supremacy. Within that historical context, and utilizing a
contrapuntal methodology, this dissertation has argued that writers from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and Hawai‘i shared a transcolonial perspective that sought not only to revise, but also to transcend, prevailing colonial visions of their nations and regions.

In the late 1800s, the Puerto Rican Ramón Emeterio Betances, the Cuban José Martí, and the Filipino José Rizal proposed ways in which their nations and regions could move beyond all types of colonialism: internal and external, mental and physical. Their transcolonial writings, spanning the time period between the early 1870s through the late 1890s, anticipated some of the foundational concepts of postcolonial studies as we study them today. Also in a transcolonial manner, deposed Hawaiian Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1898 set Hawai‘i as an equal of European imperial powers, specifically Britain, and deployed a type of anti-colonial translation that sought to discursively balance the asymmetrical power relations between the Hawaiian Islands and the United States. Like Betances, Martí, and Rizal before her, Queen Lili‘uokalani deployed a specific transcolonial strategy, which I have identified as indigenized translation, to challenge the dominant representations of Hawai‘i that had become cultural currency in the United States. These representations were widely disseminated in the speeches and writings on Hawai‘i of Mark Twain, who was arguably the most well-known U.S. writer to speak and write about Hawai‘i in the late nineteenth century. In his writings between 1866 and 1873, Twain used his famous satirical style to translate the Hawaiians into colonial stereotypes that actively promoted the idea that Hawai‘i should be annexed to the United States. In Chapter 4, I showed how between 1866 and 1873 Twain deployed his particular brand of sarcasm in the service of empire by ridiculing and denigrating the
native Hawaiians in ways that ultimately (and rather directly) promoted the idea that Hawai‘i should be annexed to the United States.

By 1901, however, Twain had completely altered his rhetorical strategy, and instead deployed what Jim Zwick describes as his “weapons of satire” virulently against, no longer in favor of, U.S. imperialism. Twain became as vocal an anti-imperialist as Betances, Martí, and Rizal, who anticipated him. In this conclusion, I want to look briefly at some of his anti-imperialist writing by focusing in particular on his well-known essay, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness.” Before doing so, however, I want to focus on two key aspects of Twain’s anti-imperialist views. First, Zwick argues that Twain’s residence and travels in Europe between 1891 and 1900 gave him first-hand exposure to global imperialism. This knowledge enabled Twain to make connections between the Boer War fought by the British from 1899 to 1902 in South Africa, the violent suppression by a multi-imperial force (including the United States) of the Boxer Rebellion in China between 1899 and 1901, and the Philippine-American War. More importantly, these global, imperialist events persuaded Twain to make a “general condemnation of imperialism.”¹ As Betances, Martí, and Rizal had done before him in the Americas and the Pacific, Twain came to the realization that U.S. imperialism was not an exception from, but inextricably connected to, the imperialist surge of the late nineteenth century. This ability to connect different imperialisms gave Twain a transcolonial vision that both enabled and informed his critique of the United States.

Whereas in 1898 Twain had been an imperialist who favored the takeover of the Philippines by the United States, by 1901 he, like Lili'uokalani (and like Mary Tyler Peabody before them both), had come to see U.S. imperialism as a threat to his nation’s democratic system of government. Twain became concerned that “trampling upon the helpless abroad had taught [the United States], by a natural process, to endure with apathy the like at home.” But Twain’s vision of a future of domestic repression in the United States because of its extra-continental imperialist expansion elided the “trampling” that had occurred against American Indian nations, which fought against removal from its beginnings through the 1890s. And while Twain denounced his country as “The United States of Lyncherdom” to condemn the racism of U.S. soldiers against the Filipinos, the centuries-long “tramplings” against the civil rights of African Americans were not enough for Twain to see that the Philippine incursion was not an exception, but rather a direct result of U.S. imperial development. Because he did not factor into his critique the national crimes committed against American Indian nations and African Americans before 1898, Twain’s transcolonial analysis differs greatly from that of Betances, Martí, and Rizal. While Twain’s transhemispheric counterparts pointed markedly to U.S. discrimination against racial minorities – Betances and Martí discussed the lynchings of African Americans, Martí also addressed the “vanishing” of American Indian nations, and Rizal criticized the United States for discriminating against the Chinese – Twain failed (or refused) to see the long-standing disconnection between U.S.

\[2\] Zwick, *Mark Twain’s Weapons of Satire*, xxxi.
ideals of republican democracy and the treatment of racial minorities within his own nation.

To gesture toward the kind of work that might yet be done in identifying the transcolonial ramifications of U.S. empire, I want to examine Twain’s essay, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness.” While this is one of the most well-known and influential essays that Twain wrote as an anti-imperialist, it has received little critical attention. Zwick is one of the few scholars who has specifically studied Twain’s anti-imperialist work, and he notes how Twain’s writings on the Philippine-American War “are among his least known.”

By the early twentieth century, Twain had transformed himself into the most famous and vocal anti-imperialist in the United States, but not before admitting in 1900 that he had left the United States in the 1890s as “a red-hot imperialist . . . [who] wanted the American eagle to go screaming into the Pacific.”

The images of heat and of the eagle screaming invest his portrayal of U.S. imperialism with immediacy and power.

In his imperialist days, Twain argued that extra-continental expansion was the obvious result of intra-continental growth, thereby acknowledging the relationship

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4 Zwick, 5.
between both forms of imperialism. In an October 15, 1900 piece in the *New York Herald*, Twain explained his views:

> It seemed tiresome and tame for [the United States] to content itself with the Rockies. Why not spread its wings over the Philippines, I asked myself? And I thought it would be a real good thing to do. … I said to myself, here are people who have suffered for three centuries. We can make them as free as ourselves, … put a miniature of the American constitution afloat in the Pacific…

Recurring again to the image of the eagle spreading its wing span, Twain further articulates the discourse of democratic imperialism, which the United States transformed from an oxymoron into a key rhetorical strategy in the discursive justification of U.S. empire. Twain deploys this discourse by noting his initial belief that imperialist expansion into the Philippines would not only free the Filipinos from centuries of Spanish colonial control, but also bestow on them the rights and benefits of the U.S. constitution. If there is a key difference in the way that the United States discursively represented its empire, compared to how European and other powers represented theirs, it is this notion of democratic imperialism, which is still deployed today, although not in those exact words.

While Twain described himself as an erstwhile “not anti-imperialist” and an enthusiastic proponent of democratic imperialism, he also articulated his sharp disillusionment and disappointment with the actual course of the Spanish-American War and its aftermath. While the United States had ostensibly taken over Manila to free the Filipinos from Spanish rule, once Spain was no longer a concern, U.S. policy changed,

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6 Ibid, 4.
and U.S. soldiers began fighting the Filipino rebels for control of the Philippines. That war, which officially lasted from February 1899 to July 1902, but which Zwick argues continued well into the next decade, “lasted longer, involved more U.S. troops, cost more lives and had more significant impact on the United States than the three-month Spanish-American war that preceded it.”  

In that same *New York Herald* piece I quoted above, Twain notes that:

> I have seen we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem . . . [N]ow I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land. 

These writings, Zwick points out, did not endear Twain to his former imperialist cohorts, who began to label him as a traitor, and later to dismiss him as a humorist. The same satirical style for which he was applauded when he advocated for the annexation of Hawai‘i, earned him the scorn of opponents when he deployed it (like Betances) as an anti-colonial tool. But the writings did turn him into the hero and virtual spokesman of the Anti-Imperialist League, which had been formed in Boston in November 1898, only a few months into the Spanish-American War.

Twain’s essay, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” in which he connects the domestic and the global, cemented his anti-imperialist credentials. In a transcolonial move, Twain represents this “Person” as all the colonized, wherever they may be, and places the United States squarely among other colonizing empires. Deploying his

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7 Zwick, *Mark Twain’s Weapons of Satire*, xviii.

8 Ibid, 5.

9 Ibid, xli.
renowned sarcasm in the service of anti-colonialism this time around, Twain asks whether “we” (by which he means imperial nations):

shall . . . go on conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness, or shall we give those poor things a rest? Shall we bang right ahead in our old-time, loud, pious way, and commit the new century to the game; or shall we sober up and sit down and think it over first?\textsuperscript{10}

Twain casts imperialism as “the game,” and as a long-standing practice that also has been long linked to claims of religious duty. By portraying imperialism as a game, Twain recognizes that obtaining imperial power is a competition where there will be winners and losers. This Person, who sits in darkness, is not one of the players of the game, but someone who must watch from the sidelines.

Twain not only portrays imperialism as a competitive tussle, but he also directly connects it to capitalism, describing it as “The Blessings-of-Civilization Trust,” and noting how there “is more money in it, more territory, more sovereignty, and other kinds of emolument, than there is in any other game that is played.” In contrast to those who get to play the game, Twain describes “the Customer Sitting in Darkness” as the one who must pay “with his blood and tears and land and liberty” for the “Actual Thing” that the Civilization Trust sells.\textsuperscript{11} The opposition that Twain establishes through his cutting humor is sharp: those who play the game at the expense of those who must watch it become rich and powerful, but those who are the supposed beneficiaries of the game actually pay for it with their lives and their territory. Twain goes on to describe William McKinley (U.S. president from 1897 to 1901), the British Prime Minister, “the Kaiser,

\textsuperscript{10} Zwick, \textit{Mark Twain’s Weapons of Satire}, 27-8.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 28-9.
and the Czar, and the French” as the major players of the game, thereby establishing the United States as an equal participant in the imperial scuffle of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. McKinley, for Twain, is “our Master of the Game [who] plays it badly” because he plays in the same repressive and violent way the British “played” in South Africa, referring to the Boer War.¹²

Twain then compares the game that he has discussed with what he calls “the American game” (his own italics), which he says the United States played in Cuba when it went in to help the insurgents win their anti-colonial fight against Spain. In Cuba, Twain states, McKinley “was following our great traditions in a way which made us very proud of him, and proud of the deep dissatisfaction which his play was provoking in Continental Europe.”¹³ The fact that McKinley had at first suggested that annexing Cuba would be “criminal aggression” is the lynchpin that, for Twain, distinguishes the early actions of the United States in the Spanish-American War from its later permutations. The “American game” is one in which the United States serves as a policeman of freedom in the hemisphere, and even the world, so that it can move into places where people are being oppressed, liberate them, bestow upon them the benefits of democracy, and then leave. It is the fact that the leaving never happens in the Philippines after the Spanish-American War which troubles Twain the most, because it corrupts “the American game” and reveals it to be the same as “the European game.”

¹² Zwick, Mark Twain’s Weapons of Satire, 29, 32.

¹³ Ibid, 32.
By revealing how a U.S. empire, veiled under the benign shape of democratic imperialism, is actually no different from the European powers that have been empires for centuries, Twain reveals the hypocrisy of that discourse. Recurring again to his symbol of “The Person Sitting in Darkness,” Twain raises the question of how this Person:

is almost sure to say: ‘There is something curious about this – curious and unaccountable. There must be two Americas: one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive’s new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on; then kills him to get his land.’

Like Betances and Martí, who initially admired the United States as a paragon of liberty and democracy, but who became disillusioned when the talons of the eagle spread over their Caribbean region, Twain calls attention to the fact that democracy and imperialism cannot coexist. However, there were always two Americas for American Indian nations, for African Americans, for Latinos and Asians, and for other ethnic, racial, national and gender minorities: one that espoused freedom and one that withheld it. While Twain is able to connect the domestic and the global to warn against the corruption of the nation because of its extra-continental actions, he again elides the long history of disconnection between such foundational democratic discourses and intra-continental imperialism in the United States.

Twain revises and represents, in a transcolonial manner, his position on U.S. imperialism, but he is not able or willing to envision empire as a long-standing practice, and instead represents it as a corruption of the national “game.” Still, his anti-colonial

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critique of McKinley’s actions toward the Philippines is strident as he equates imperialism and slavery (as several of the writers I have discussed did). In identifying the “Trinity of our national gods,” Twain mentions “Washington, the Sword of the Liberator; Lincoln, the Slave’s Broken Chains; the Master [McKinley], the Chains Repaired.”

George Washington, the ultimate anti-colonial hero in U.S. history, has the same standing for Twain as Abraham Lincoln, who freed the slaves. In this way, he equates colonial shackles, such as those which the United States suffered under Britain, with the physical shackles of slavery. When it comes to describing McKinley, then, the chains that are reinstated are both those of colonial oppression and slavery, although this time the United States is not the one that suffers, but the oppressor that puts them on that Person who sits in darkness. Dramatically, Twain ends the essay by suggesting that the U.S. flag should be altered to represent the true nature of an imperialist nation: “. . . we can have just our usual flag, with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and cross-bones.” In the essay, Twain thus links U.S. imperialism not only to European imperialism, but also describes it in terms of pirating, or of violently and illegally taking from others for profit.

Twain’s concern over the unavoidable corruption of the United States because of imperialism (echoing Mary Tyler Peabody’s, as I discussed in Chapter 2) can be counterpoised in a contrapuntal manner against some of Ambrose Bierce’s journalistic writings between 1898 and 1901. Although Bierce criticized the Spanish-American War,
mostly the way in which it was conducted, he also deployed and disseminated pro-imperialist discourses, especially in his representations of the Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Filipinos. When describing the “Cuban insurgents” in 1897, Bierce states that they are “mostly Negroes and Negroids, ignorant, superstitious almost beyond belief and brutal exceedingly.” But unlike Twain who distinguishes clearly between democracy and imperialism, Bierce is not interested at all in arguing that there is any democracy involved in imperial actions. When discussing the takeover of the Philippines in 1898, Bierce demonstrates an openly imperialist attitude that makes no pretensions about democracy:

We are taking the Philippines from Spain because we have the right. They are spoils of the victor and a victor’s rights are coterminous with his power. We are taking them from the Filipinos because we want them. Our action has no other character than purveyance of our own desires. Why should we not candidly say so, and free ourselves from the charge of sniveling hypocrisy?  

In clear contrast to Twain’s anti-colonial view, Bierce advocates for a matter-of-fact stance on imperialism that simply requires honesty instead of rhetoric when discussing “the facts.”

Also unlike Twain, who does not minimize or racialize his Person Sitting in Darkness, Bierce deploys a racist rhetoric that applies to and connects any and all colonized peoples, domestic and foreign. Bierce explains his ideas by deploying the notion of a military Manifest Destiny for all civilized nations:

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18 Ibid, 139.
If a backward or savage people have in it the possibilities of civilization and enlightenment nothing better can occur to it than subjugation by any of the great military powers of to-day. The most powerful nations are the most advanced in all that we hold to be best for mankind, and in their own interest they impart to subject races as fast as these are fitted to receive it.\(^{19}\)

But Bierce adds the caveat that “not all the breeds of men have possibilities of civilization,” further noting how those who believe the contrary still think “that we can ‘elevate’ the negro, civilize the red Indian and Christianize the Chinaman.” By first identifying the intra-continental Others in the United States, Bierce then argues that:

We do not know what possibilities of civilization may inhere in the various mongrel races inhabiting the Philippine islands . . . Of all it may safely be said that their only hope lies in subjugation by a master race.\(^{20}\)

Racializing the Filipinos as “mongrels,” Bierce basically deploys the notion of “the white man’s burden,” as expressed by Rudyard Kipling in his eponymous poem of 1899 (written with the United States in mind). By the time Twain became a committed anti-imperialist, Bierce stepped into the formerly pro-imperialist shoes Twain had taken off, and became a strong, if rather acerbic, advocate for Manifest Destiny in the Pacific.

Reading Twain and Bierce contrapuntally, and examining them together through a transcolonial lens, provides further evidence that the study of U.S. imperialism must be a dialectical one, or one that recognizes that the colonial and the anti-colonial are not so much antipodes as symbiotically linked elements of a single geopolitical phenomenon. Bierce foretold that the “subjugation” of the Filipinos would take a long time, and by 1903 the Anti-Imperialist League asked Twain for support in its campaign against

\(^{19}\) Berkove, *Skepticism and Dissent*, 184.

\(^{20}\) Idem.
atrocities committed by U.S. soldiers in the Philippines. One such widely reported atrocity was the torture of a Filipino priest through the use of the “water cure,” which consisted in nearly drowning the prisoner.21 A contemporary reader cannot avoid making the connection between the issues that arose during the Philippine-American War, and today’s controversy over “waterboarding” as the United States is five years into its colonial occupation of Iraq. But while back in the 1900s Twain made rhetorically convincing connections between the United States and other empires or empire-to-be – such as Britain, France, and Germany – today the United States stands as the most powerful, and perhaps only, remaining empire in the world. Given the connections between the context of U.S. empire in the late nineteenth century and those at the beginning of the twenty-first, the study of its ramifications remains not only timely but also significant.

With the partial hope of providing a clearer understanding of the events that have preceded our own time, I have juxtaposed colonial visions and transcolonial revisions in both the Americas and the Pacific to paint a more complete picture of the discursive ramifications of U.S. empire in the late nineteenth century. This dissertation by no means suggests that my chosen juxtapositions are the only ones to be made, or even the most significant. But this work does show how we, as scholars interested in the tendrils of empire, can find unexpected connections that contribute to the post-nationalist trend in our field, and to the rising fields of transhemispheric and transcolonial studies. By locating U.S. imperialism within the context of the global imperial boom of the late

nineteenth century, my study challenges dominant representations of U.S. empire as an exception, and as radically different from its European counterparts. The time period of this study, between 1831 and 1902, reveals that the discursive representations of empire in and outside the United States directly responded to historical developments that were global (not only national or regional), and certainly not exceptional, in nature. Following post-nationalist approaches, my dissertation advocates for a broadening of our critical lens to include texts from different hemispheres, cultures, languages, and nations. I believe this type of work expands and enriches our ability to interpret not only what Rowe has described as “the genealogies of U.S. empire,” but also the connected, and simultaneous genealogies of the national and regional revisions that transcolonially countered empire across the globe.
APPENDIX A

Portrait of Queen Victoria, Second Jubilee, 1887
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