

**“This Humble Work”: Puerto Rican and Philippine Literature
between Spanish and United States Empires**

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Abstract

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“‘This Humble Work’: Puerto Rican and Philippine Literature between Spanish and United States Empires” interrogates the concept of value that underpins contemporary theories of world literature, arguing that this field of inquiry reproduces the imperial relationships that shaped the origins of literary studies. By tracing the growth in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of literary culture in two of the last remaining Spanish colonies, “This Humble Work” proposes an alternative theory of studying world literature by positing the study of the empire as essential to the concept of “literariness.” This dissertation utilizes postcolonial and Marxist theories to reconceive of literature as a world-making venture that represents forces of domination and resistance to political and economic projects which would otherwise remain beyond intelligibility.

“This Humble Work” begins with an investigation into the theory of aesthetic judgment developed by Immanuel Kant in the late eighteenth century, since Kant’s theory is foundational to contemporary literary study. Kant founds his theory of the subject in its ability to judge free from irrational bases and historical contingencies, a position that coincides with political economists in the fifty years following Kant as they attempt to grapple with the concept of an economic subject. The presupposition that the subject exists in its judgment as a free individual forms the backbone of contemporary studies of literature, including world literature. “This Humble Work” then pursues how this subject position manifested itself in Puerto Rico and the Philippines from 1849-1926, demonstrating in the process four problems that emerged in the struggle to found communities in these territories that would be based on the principle of the ahistorical subject. The problems of culture, temporality, identity, and worlding arise in the literary projects of the Spanish empire as they struggle to integrate Puerto Rican and Philippine subjects into new political-economic configurations premised on the Kantian “ideal” subject. Through an examination of literary projects in Spanish and Tagalog from these colonies during their transition from the Spanish Empire to the United States Empire after 1898, these four problems are revealed as the limits of literary possibility for texts that emerge from outside of metropolitan society. In the process, “This Humble Work” exposes the limits of world literature to ever account fully for the totality of forces that make the modern world.

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Introduction

The title of this project, “‘This Humble Work:’ Puerto Rican and Philippine Letters between Spanish and United States Empires,” is taken from the first translation in 2004 of a work from 1876, a collection of short stories called *Cuentos filipinos (Philippine Stories)* in a *costumbrista* style by the writer José Montero y Vidal. Montero y Vidal was better known for his *Historia general de la islas filipinas (General History of the Philippine Islands)* of 1887, which helped earn him entry into the Real Academia de Historia (Royal Academy of History). A translation of the Spanish “esta obrita,” “this humble work,” encapsulates the link between the aesthetic valuation of literary objects and the legacies of imperialism that are central to the constitution of “literature” as an object of study in the contemporary world. “[T]he institutionalization of literature” in Spain at the end of the eighteenth century, Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini have written, “corresponds to the emergence of the aesthetic as a major category of conceptualization and theorization of the literary artefact” (“Introduction: From Discourse” 10). In fact, as Godzich and Spadaccini explore across three volumes of essays on Hispanic literary culture, literature as an object of aesthetic judgment was institutionalized through the establishment of “literariness” as a criterion of valuation and the formulation of art as “a truth that is extremely difficult to reveal” (“Introduction: The Course” 21). What is not explained in this formulation is how literariness is not universally available to anyone, but has

been instituted along lines drawn by Euro-American imperialism. Through the geography of literary value that pervaded the late nineteenth-century Spanish imperial order and the early twentieth-century empire of the United States of America—a transition that itself represents a particular crisis of literary, political, and economic values—the history of the literary, insofar as it is tied to aesthetics, has enabled and been enabled by the history of market valuation and the expansion of market capitalism across the globe.

The translators of Montero y Vidal's *Cuentos filipinos* happened on the phrase “this humble work” in the preface that the author appended to the second edition of his text, which appeared in 1883 (1/xv).¹ “Humble work” is a partial translation, as the diminutive “obrita” could mean merely “small” (as in size) or “slight” (as compared to other, more “important” texts). But its very smallness, its slightness in comparison to other works, suggests the appropriateness of its translation as “humble,” suggesting that its relative importance to Spain as a collection of *costumbrista* fictions is minimal. (Montero y Vidal, after all, was inducted into the historian's Academy, not the Academy for language.) As I will argue over the course of this text, works like *Cuentos filipinos* are indeed valuable and disproportionately so, for, as will become apparent, at the same time that Montero y Vidal calls the collection by this diminutive, he vaunts its value to capital.

In his introduction to the second edition, Montero y Vidal writes of the value of *Cuentos filipinos* to himself, since the sales of these two editions have earned him a share in the proceeds. But he also writes of its value to Europeans more generally, because it can provide essential

¹ Translations from *Cuentos filipinos* used throughout this dissertation are from the edition by Renán S. Prado et al. Page numbers for the translation follow the original and are separated by a slash. Occasionally, slight modifications have been made based on the 1883 edition in Spanish. Where these modifications are significant, they have been noted. For many of the Spanish- and Tagalog-language texts in this dissertation, no English translation is available, and, as a result, unless otherwise noted, as here, all translations from Spanish and Tagalog should be considered my own.

knowledge to them about the Philippines, “un país de que tan escasas y en general erróneas noticias se tienen en Europa” (“this country about which, in Europe, there is such scarce and generally erroneous news”) (1-2/xv). The modesty with which Montero y Vidal excuses his short stories’ lack of aesthetic value is nonetheless premised on the volume’s utility to capital, both Montero y Vidal’s own and that of the Europeans who will be informed of reality by his fiction. This is not, however, commensurate with its aesthetic value (or lack thereof): the *falsa modestia* with which the Spanish historian denigrates his fiction as humble art only seems to heighten its value to capitalism. Its value to Europe is based on its ability to represent reality (“news”) as if the fiction itself was transparent, as if reality reveals itself within its pages with no labor by the artist and thus no “art.”

But its value to the Philippines and to the Filipinos that it claims to depict is even stranger, as this value is based on the volume’s “poniendo en sus manos [i.e. the hands of the Filipinos] libros que les den á conocer sus propias costumbres y analicen minuciosa y concienzudamente sus instintos, sus gustos, sus pasiones, es decir, su idiosincrasia” (“giv[ing] them books that will acquaint them with their own customs, that will make them conscientiously analyze in-depth their instincts, desires, passions, and idiosyncrasies”) (4/xvi-xvii). If the fiction was merely a medium of transmission for Europe—in which transparency is assumed in the claim that this “humble work” is scarcely worthy of aesthetic consideration—it is revelatory for the Philippines and the Filipinos Montero y Vidal claims to depict. *Cuentos filipinos* discloses the reality that underlies the lives of Filipinos, representing themselves to themselves. The customs and habits of daily life in the Philippines—which are, for Europe, transparent and accessible—are, for the Philippines, opaque and in need of interpretation. The readers of *Cuentos filipinos* thus partake of this fiction in two distinct ways, both of which are based on the same “facts” represented in this

fiction, but whose orientation is based on their subject position as geographically and racially defined. The first (European) subject uses these “instincts, desires,” etc. not in order to know the second (Filipino) subject, but in order to know about their “costumbres, organizacion, producciones, industria y comercio” (“customs, organization, products, industries, and commerce”) (3/xvi; I follow the orthography of the original here). In other words, the knowability of certain (Filipino) subjects is useful to the commercial success of certain (European) subjects. For the Filipinos, the gain is modern subjectivity itself, the knowing of oneself as a unity in a social process.² As I will argue over the course of this dissertation, it is this disproportion, and the geography of literary value that it enacts, that structure both empire and contemporary theories of world literature.

The term “geography of literary value” may recall Franco Moretti’s recent work, which has focused on quantitative data collection of cultural production as a means to understand a world-system of literature.³ For Moretti, the value of a text is most properly approximated by literary-historical research through its relation to the web of all other texts produced, such that the “success” of a given text in the literary field can be deduced from its origins in, impact on or filiation with other (including critical and theoretical) texts. The paradigm of value is thus linked to markets and indexed by sales figures. Value then reflects material reality, responds to it, and, at least in some measure, is accountable to the presumption of a reality of capitalist exchange. This can be seen in claims such as this one, drawn from his examination of how the form of the novel “translates” from locales in Europe to those in the Global South: “these novels are all

² This study thus complements in some ways Jonathan Beller’s *Acquiring Eyes*, in which he attempts “to elaborate from a subaltern perspective the processes of the generalized subsumption of culture, and particularly of visual culture, by the economic sphere” (3). Though I do not claim to examine the transvaluation of culture into capital from the perspective of the subaltern in the fullest sense of that term, I am interested in how subaltern subjectivity is produced through culture and how that process occurs in tandem with (but not in submission to) the expansion of global capitalist modernity.

³ Moretti’s research goals are laid out most succinctly in “Conjectures” and *Graphs*. His actual, empirically-based essays and books have veered slightly from the goals as laid out in these texts.

‘amalgamations of different traditions’—and all of the same kind: they combine *a plot from the core, and a style from the periphery*” (Moretti, “Evolution” 132, emphasis in original). “Core” and “periphery” are not merely terms borrowed from the economic models of world-systems analysis; they constitute a historical geography, as well: Moretti’s core is avowedly the same as Immanuel Wallerstein’s, the founder of world-systems methodology. One need not argue with the empirical facts Moretti cites in this essay to question the presumption of his argument: that political economy is *the determinant* of literary development, rather than the two operating on each other *simultaneously* and *dialectically*.

Value is as much a means of organizing sociality as it is reflective of social relations. In “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value,” Gayatri Spivak notes that the predication of the subject determines the question of value, whether that subject is conceived as “idealist” (whose predication is consciousness) or “materialist” (whose predication is labor-power) (154). The idealist conception of value is thus premised on “the subject’s irreducible intendedness towards the object,” while the materialist conception of the value is based on “the irreducible possibility that the subject be more than adequate—super-adequate—to itself” (154). The two modalities of subjectivity are thus founded on the impossibility of the individual absorbing all of its own possibilities. In other words, the subject’s attention and its own consumption of that attention are disproportionate. In both the idealist and materialist accounts, the subject comes into existence the moment that it is in excess, when it is connected to the world of that toward which it intends, whether it is the pre-constituted object of idealism or the production of the object of materialism. In either its idealist or materialist guises, value is that which signifies the individual’s intention toward the world and their entrance into the social through acknowledgment of their own radical incompleteness. Value is produced simultaneously with the

subject as an expression of their relationship to the process of becoming a subject through its distinction from the object, what can be called subjectivization.

If value is the manifestation of the sociality of subjectivity, it should be possible to trace different experiences of subjectivization through the valuative schemas that pertain in certain times and places. Works such as Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* and John Guillory's *Cultural Capital*—each, in very different ways, representative of the contemporary formation of literary studies—have sought to expand upon the relationship between the aesthetic domain and the economic realm, by exposing valuative schemas in the one as analogic to the other. Instead, I interrogate how the relationship between aesthetics and economics is itself contingent on the production of uneven spatio-temporal geographies of valuation and judgment. I demonstrate, in other words, that judgment itself is what maintains empire after the colonial enthusiasm of the nineteenth century has faded.

It is no coincidence, then, that the communities in which Guillory imagines the apotheosis of his critique is a utopian, Marxist horizon in which the socialization of “the means of production and consumption would be the condition of an aestheticism unbound” (340). This homogeneous site of literariness without value is, however, “only a thought experiment” (340), and its only clear spatial and temporal demarcation is that it is “beyond” the late twentieth century's Anglo-American-dominated globe. Following the historical and philosophical critiques leveled at the Global North's imagining of itself and the production of the Global South as marginal in the imaginary of the North—a critique exemplified by Enrique Dussel's work—a new and necessary avenue of critique in the field of literary studies can be imagined, one that understands the production of “literature”—with “literariness” as its primary attribute—to be conditioned by the production of cultural terrains that are “non-literary.” Along the lines of

Ileana Rodríguez's definition of Latin American Subaltern Studies as "postmodern and postrevolutionary attempts to understand the limits of previous hermeneutics by challenging culture to think of itself from the point of view of its own negation" (9), this study critiques the normative account of world literature by reading with attention what Moretti has called "the slaughterhouse of literature," namely, those texts that have disappeared from the purview of literary critics and historians.

By reading these texts, I would caution against an overly hasty politicization of their social position in relation to the dominant literatures that occupy most normative accounts of world literature. The literatures that are discussed here are not "minor" in the sense given this term by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, since their production has no specific mode of expression, that is, no particular language. Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that a minor literature is "that which a minority constructs within a major language" (16)—though it applies to many of the texts produced in the Global South and especially in Puerto Rico and the Philippines throughout the period that this dissertation covers (roughly 1850-1930)—tends to restrict the purview of attention to the relationship between the minor and the major. In the context of these two insular territories, this would mean locating their literary culture in relation to the two metropolitan cultures that claimed them during this era. Though references to the literary cultures of the United States and (especially) Spain occur repeatedly in this study, these should not be taken to be more determinant of the literature under question than the internal dynamics of the societies in which they appear,⁴ such as demographic changes, monetary policy, language instruction, etc. All of these are aspects of social belonging that these empires sought to control, but which continually exceeded their capacity to contain such dynamics. Nor should references to

⁴ A focus on internal dynamics and their role in literary production is the objective of most "national" literary histories, including Francisco Manrique Cabrera (*Historia*) and Resil B. Mojares (*Origins*).

metropolitan literature be taken to preclude or suppress relationships of these societies with other so-called “minor” societies,⁵ such as is particularly the case in Chapter Five, where I discuss Philippine literature in Spanish that draws on Latin American *modernista* texts.

In addition to this formal feature of the literature under discussion here, there is another matter related to the broader sphere of cultural production that must not be analyzed through the lens of the “minor.” These are the preconditions inherent in the definition of the “minor” that Deleuze and Guattari give as “the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature” (18). The production of “great literature” through its cordoning off of the revolutionary tendencies within it does not concern me here; rather, what I focus on is the production of less valued/less valuable texts in and through the (re)production of the ideology of literary value that these texts themselves represent. The short stories and novels in this study are not minor, that is, because *the literary itself*, as it comes to be conceived and disseminated as an expression of the “cultural,” is an institutionalization of the imperial means of determining judgment as the limit of the human, making judgment the means by which subjects are recognized *as such* in the modern world. The texts in this study, even the most “subaltern” or “minor,” do not challenge the conditions that literariness places on modern subjects; they embody these conditions.

The crux of literature’s development as an articulation of empire across the globe has to do in part with how economic theories of labor-value have produced the art object as the negative of exchange-value proper in market societies. Karl Marx, formulating a theory of labor (production) that would distinguish it from other types of (reproductive) activity, claims that we “presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human,” since “[a]t the end of every labour-

⁵ The connections between peripheral (“minor”) literary cultures is the object of the collection edited by Shu-Mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet.

process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement” (*Capital* 1:198). What makes activity productive is its preconceived purpose, legible to others as the form of the imagination imprinted in the work of the laborer. Because of this trace of the imagination, humanity is stamped into the objects of labor processes as the specter of human freedom, i.e. the ability to produce from the imagination rather than from the laws of nature. Labor, in this formulation, is the materialization of subjectivity via the imagination.

Throughout this dissertation, aesthetics will be taken to be the domain in which formed materials are judged to have come into existence *without labor* in the sense that Marx made characteristic of it, that is, the reproduction of the imagination on material objects. Aesthetics is the experience of materiality as productive, as autonomous and unique to itself. The subject’s encounter with an object—to the extent that it is an aesthetic encounter—is therefore an encounter stripped of subjectivity as an end materialized in the object. It is, in Kant’s idiom, the subject’s experience of a “subjective purposiveness in the representation of an object without any end (objective or subjective)” that can be determined (*Critique of the Power of Judgment* 106).⁶ Aesthetics is a mode of experience that cannot propose a purpose to the existence of what the subject experiences, even as the consciousness of the idealist subject insists that it must have a reason for existing. In Jacques Derrida’s account of this assessment, Kant’s argument rests on the presumption that art itself is an extension of nature that operates through the artist. It is not mimesis, strictly speaking, because it is not an imitation of nature; instead, “nature, assigning its

⁶ This text will hereafter be labeled *CPJ* to distinguish it from the *Critique of Pure Reason (CPuR)*; page numbers will refer to the English translations included in the list of works cited and not (as is customary in Kant studies) to the Akademie edition in German.

rules to genius, folds itself, returns to itself, reflects itself through art” (“Economimesis” 4).⁷ The material existence of nature—the *physis*—returns to the subject in art, but not *as* nature. It comes back to the subject as a set of relations that have imprinted themselves on the artwork through the hand of the artist but without any willed intention. Kantian aesthetics is thus the moment that labor is evacuated from the scene of production in modernity, yielding value to the extent that the absolute freedom of the artist from the dictates of necessity are glimpsed as “freedom” in the work of art. Or, as Derrida writes, it is “the production of freedom by means of freedom” (5).

The materiality of production (the worker’s hand, their daily bread) is effaced by this glimpse of nature (as freedom), a glimpse that is reflected in the artwork as self-contained and belonging to the object itself. It is glimpsed as the world of the artwork. In this sense, Jacques Rancière claims that “the movement belonging to the aesthetic regime”—his term for post-Kantian aesthetic subjectivization—“tends to erase the specificities of the arts and to blur the boundaries that separate them from each other and from ordinary experience” (*Aisthesis* xii). In the aesthetic regime, all objects are equally capable of being art because artistic value is not linked to a mode of production or the distribution of appropriate forms for particular contents, such as in the regime of art that Rancière calls “representational.” Art in the aesthetic regime is “a form of thought that has become foreign to itself” (Rancière, *Politics* 23). The aesthetic regime of art thus appears when “modes of perception and regimes of emotion” are applied to the evaluation of objects (*Aisthesis* x), rather than the evaluation of means of representing a presupposed reality. The subject that appreciates and the object appreciated in the aesthetic regime is the sensibility with which the experiencing subject encounters the object. To the extent

⁷ Chapter One, below, contains a more extended discussion of this problem and the racialized difference at the core of subjectivization in Kant’s theory.

that aesthetics can be said to apply a value (a sense, a meaning, an intention) to objects,⁸ it can be claimed that aesthetic value is determined by how much of the subject's ideational apparatus is brought to bear on the object in order to "make sense" of it as being in the subject's world. Aesthetic experience values the thickest set of represented relations (what can be termed the object's "world") for which the hierarchically distributed processes of material labor (the "globe") serves as a base that is implicit in the object and invisible to the subject.⁹

If Rancière seems to have stepped into an idealist mode in the preceding paragraph, it is because capitalism links the idealist and materialist predications of the subject through the "freeing" of labor-power in the consciousness of the subject (Spivak, "Scattered" 161). Economistic accounts of the subject acknowledge this "freeing"—and its concomitant, value—to come into existence anywhere where there is "an absence of extra-economic coercion" (167). Thus, while economics as a discipline can acknowledge the economic coercion called "need,"¹⁰ it cannot maintain its coherence when coercions *other* than the economic (such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, etc.) factor into the determinations of labor's use. In these accounts, the intimate connections between economic coercions (which are integral to the system of capitalism, and therefore, in this line of thought, to the condition of freedom, as well) and the "extra-economic" identities with which they are produced are considered external to, rather than an aporia within, capitalist systems. Value, as generally discussed, appears to *efface* regimes of identification *to the extent* that capitalism is seen to be operative.¹¹ Spivak, instead, proposes value as a "'prism' through which a complex, intersecting, but often discontinuous array of

⁸ I borrow this formulation of "value" as sense or meaning from Jean-Luc Nancy.

⁹ My formulation of the artwork's world thus resembles Eric Hayot's "history of the world of the work of art," which is "always, simultaneously, a history of the idea of the world, and a history of the world as a material substrate, and object of human practice" (26).

¹⁰ Jean Baudrillard, however, calls "need"—as the predication of the concept of use-value—an ideological projection of the concept of exchange-value in capitalist society (*Mirror* 30).

¹¹ For a narrative and bibliography of this mainstream conception of value—in both its right and left political perspectives—see Noel Castree (46-65).

individual and group identities and activities in production and place are brought into a social relation” (Castree 72). “Value,” in the economic sense (Marx, *Capital* 1:54-105), is thus a distribution of forms of value experienced wherever the social exists, and implicitly bound to *how* the world is experienced as social by individual subjects (Spivak, “Scattered 166-67). The forms of value that result—which are the unique experiences by a subject of an object that are given in a particular encounter but which are the basis of sociality itself—are incorporated into the “common sense” of a community, forming canons of perception that become a part of the ideology of the present. Thus unities such as “American literature,” “African-American art,” “*l’écriture féminine*” or “world literature” are both heuristics for studying the globe and judgments upon it.

As a result of the continual incorporation of new forms of value into the expression of the subject and the reciprocal incorporation of new subjects (and their expressions) into forms of value, aesthetic experience ages quickly, becoming, in Antonio Gramsci’s telling phrase, “the folklore of the future” (qtd. in Blanco, *Frontier* 8). This is why aesthetic “styles” are constantly and necessarily being overcome, since the aesthetic domain is posited as the outside to the material conditions of (its) production. If “style” is merely an expression of a material relation, style becomes almost instantaneously the “imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser, “Ideology” 162), and thus a part of the (re)production of society as a totality. Style therefore comes to reveal that which aesthetics *must conceal* in order *to be* anything.

Too often, style is taken as period, such that modernism, the Baroque, or naturalism are used as stylistic typologies and temporal markers. As Claudio Guillén pointed out in the middle of the last century, “literary norms, standards, styles will tend to form static clusters,” which, as a

result, may lead the confused critic “to conclude that a style *is* a period or a concept fully coincident with it” (“Second” 427, italics in original). In their apparently static forms, style expresses the real distribution of forms of value as normative within a given social structure. Style thus articulates differing regimes of judgment within a single domain (the aesthetic), and mimics the structure of empire itself, whose legitimacy rests on the claim of doing justice to difference, as Vince Schleitwiler has argued.

Style’s articulation of differing forms of value is enacted at the individual level through identificatory regimes whose origin lies in language. Identity thus comes to be the language of experience (of difference) that makes communicable (i.e. that fashions communities of) the accumulation of historical contingency that a life signifies. The primary role played by language results, Spivak argues, from its activation of “the public-private in every human infant,” since language “has a history; it is public before our births and will continue so after our deaths. Yet every infant invents it and makes it the most private thing, touching the very interiority of the heart” (“Nationalism” 285). Language thus mediates the accumulation of contingency to a shared set of assumptions and expectations, to consolidate the power of judgment to a set of normative judgments.

For Spivak, the comparative approach has the potential to undo this consolidation through de-transcendentalization, the decoupling of the public language in which nationalism (as the nation-state) is performed from the private language of subject-formation (290-91).¹² Through Spivak’s articulation of the nation as a question asked of the membrane between the public/private divide called language, the limits of “national” literature as a term of inquiry become clear. Language is what constitutes nationalism as “the product of a collective

¹² This is important for her as that which might be harnessed to a newly civic state, invested in combating global economic imperatives. See also Spivak’s call for a renovated comparative literature imbued with the regional competencies of area studies in *Death*.

imagination constructed through remembrance” (288). Expanding on Benedict Anderson’s formulation of the nation as imagined community, Spivak suggests that it is language’s (apparent) eternity that allows it to mediate communities and provide them with the past and future necessary to give meaning to the community itself. National literatures, then, as the articulation of “nationalism” in the art of language/language of art, might be more specifically called “language-literature” as the memorial project of art that participates in the nationalist enterprise.

It is this nationalist enterprise of a language-literature that is often the site of scholarly intervention.¹³ But in order to escape the binds of the nationalist imaginary, Spivak suggests a turn to “the comparativist imagination that undoes that possessive spell” of nationalism (“Nationalism” 285). Language-literature, then, as the “possessive spell” of nationalism that binds the individual utterance to the collective history of its linguistic heritage, is continually in competition with “literature” as a comparative exercise, a step outside of the communal remembrance project toward another belonging.

It might be helpful to schematize the approach I am taking to the delineation of literature and language-literatures as a single system. Guillén has claimed that to speak of literature as a system “can refer to a stable order but also to a moment in a process of structuration. A system can be relatively open, loose, disjointed. . . . Our subject is a certain type of *mental* order, characterized by the functional importance of the relationships obtaining between its various parts” (“Literature” 378, italics in original). It is in this latter, articulated, sense of a system that the language-literatures subsystemic process can be seen. One possible way to envision this is by calling the system (A) “Literature,” which organizes a subsystem (B) of literary production,

¹³ E.g. Shu-mei Shih, “Global.” Pascale Casanova falls into this trap, too, to a certain extent, although with a greater emphasis on the writer as representative of a national position.

where each subsystem (B) is internally capable (more or less) of mutual intelligibility and shares a more or less common historical accumulation (a shared set of references, interventions, relations). Thus “Hispanophone literature,” “literature in the Hispanic tradition,” or simply “Spanish literature,” serve as shorthand names for histories of collection, canonization, and influence. What I am calling “language-literatures” are these subsystems (Bs), while movement between them in the form of translations, influences, plagiarism, and the like operates between subsystems (Bs) through the system (A). Thus if Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*—from one language-literature with a particular history and a specific trajectory (B₁, it could be called)—becomes a reference point in Benito Pérez Galdós’ *Doña Perfecta*—from a language-literature with a different history and a distinct trajectory (B₂, perhaps)—they serve as distinct points within separate language-literatures that meet in the system (A) in the moment of exchange and reconstitute themselves through this moment. On the other end of the exchange, then, is a new literature (B₃), that may nonetheless have little or no impact on other works in the first two subsystems (B₁ and B₂).

Though the interventions themselves may be recognized and acknowledged within the subsystems (Bs)—an author may acknowledge his indebtedness to another, a translation may bear the name of the original author as well as the translator—they no longer participate in the system (A). However, the original movement itself helps constitute and reorganize the overarching system (A) in a feedback loop, though it may not be recognized or recognizable at the level of the system (A), depending on the strength of the various language-literatures (Bs) within the world-system. Thus, Galdós, determinant for the Spanish literature that followed (which might still be considered B₂), was nonetheless of less impact on Literature (A) than

Flaubert (from B₁), whose author-function intervenes in a larger number of subsystems than Galdós' (Bs).¹⁴

So far, this formulation is not very distinct from the world-systems theory of Moretti. He describes a fairly similar structure, with an emphasis on the distinct morphological characteristics of each of these bodies. For Moretti, the term “world literature” has too frequently collapsed two distinct referents: a “‘first’ *Weltliteratur* [that] is a mosaic of separate, ‘local’ cultures . . . best explained by (some version of) evolutionary theory” and a “‘second’ *Weltliteratur* (which I [Moretti] would prefer to call world literary system) [that] is unified by the international literary market” and “is best explained by (some version of) world-systems analysis” (“Evolution” 134-35). Though this schema appears to resemble what I am calling the subsystems (Bs) and the system (A), Moretti’s separation of the two systems is both too clumsy and too neat. By dividing the two *Weltliteraturen* and providing each with its own set of appropriate tools, Moretti has reiterated the nationalist ideology at the level of theory. If “world literature” is going to mean anything more than the aggregation and quantitative analysis of a *Welt*’s-worth of *Literaturen*, if it is to be *both* “worldly” and “literary,” it must be able *to articulate* these two *Weltliteraturen*. For “world literature” to mean anything at all, it must be *both* singular and diverse, and the tools used to interrogate it must be designed for this single task.

While Moretti has admitted to oscillating between the two discrete, though complementary, systems outlined above (“Evolution” 121; cf. “The End” 138), other theorists have concentrated almost exclusively on histories of the system (A) or of the subsystems (Bs). Pascale Casanova’s *The World Republic of Letters* is an example of the former, where the presumption of the “literary” as homogeneous and self-identical occludes the contextual histories

¹⁴ My use of “author-function” here is indebted to Foucault, “What Is an Author?”

in which the “literary” as a regime develops.¹⁵ On the other side, for David Damrosch, “world literature” is largely restricted to the histories—multiple and complex as they may be—of the language-literatures (Bs) and their interactions, while taking the system of Literature (A)—which might be called the realm of literary communicability—as a given. His work has therefore tended to focus on transmission and reception histories, while barely touching on how the very concepts of literariness that pertain in certain times and places are affected by the material realities of circulation. For world literature to be anything other than a literary-historical project, then, for world literature to truly account for *how* and *why what* moves across, between, and within language-literatures, it must interrogate the very formation of “the literary.” It must incorporate not only an analysis of the center and periphery that *each* language-literature forms within itself *but also necessarily* the organizations that produce “centers” and “peripheries” in the first place, that is, aesthetic value itself. It must tackle Literature as a system (A) of subsystems (Bs). The scope of the projects named above is such that they do not shuttle between system (A) and subsystem (B). It is this shuttling itself—what Kojin Karatani would call a “transposition” (133)—that allows us to understand how Literature as a world (A) begins to generate and be generated by its interactions with language-literatures (Bs).

One inspiration for this type of thinking is Édouard Glissant’s concepts of *le chaos-monde*, *les échos-monde*, and *la totalité-monde*. A community’s *écho-monde* is the image that the community imagines itself to appear as in front of corresponding *échos-monde*, a society-image that is reflected by other society-images. The sum of all *échos-monde*, in their “interdependent variances jointly piece together the interactive totality,” or *totalité-monde* (Glissant 92-93). The “interactive totality” offers the super-adequacy of the society-image—both sufficient to itself and yet more than sufficient in its reciprocity with all other society-images, in its intendedness

¹⁵ On this “mystification” in Casanova, see Christopher Prendergast.

toward them—that provides a structure (*la totalité-monde*) for inchoate events (the multiplicity of which forms *le chaos-monde*). Society-images, the *échos-monde*, are created through their development as different but corresponding to the divergent and parallel society-images. It is thus in a constitutive exposure to the outside, to the *chaos-monde*, that society can form an image of itself through what is, therefore, a cosmopolitan cultivation (a *totalité-monde*). The *échos-monde* operate homologously with what I am calling the language-literatures (subsystems B), creating the *appearance of particularity* but only through their necessarily open and porous relation with all other particularities.¹⁶

As will become evident over the course of this dissertation, not all language-literatures (Bs) are equal within the modern global literary structure (A), a structure that Rancière would call the “aesthetic regime.” It is a regime characterized by its origins in modernity’s interpellation and conduction of the very lives of subjects. Art, as Rancière claims, “begins to be named as such, not by closing itself off in some celestial autonomy, but on the contrary by giving itself a new subject, the people, and a new place, history” (*Aisthesis* xiii). Inasmuch as a “people” can come to find itself in a “history,” that is, inasmuch as a “people” can be constituted as a subject, this people can enter into the aesthetic. The people’s becoming has usually been thought along national lines.¹⁷ The corollary, however, suggests the inapplicability of this schema to the study of literature, as it follows that only at the point of national independence (almost invariably through the apparatus of a state) can a literary existence be posited for the individual subjects of nationalist ideology. Entire swaths of literary history must disappear in this narrative, for where

¹⁶ This structure could be homologously extended to the concept of a “national economy,” whose super-adequacy (as autoimmunity) Pheng Cheah has discussed (“Crises”).

¹⁷ Anderson (*Imagined*) is the quintessential account here, but see also, e.g. Cheah, *Spectral*; Etienne Balibar, “Nation;” Spivak, “Nationalism;” Partha Chatterjee; Zilka Janer; and Mojares, *Origins*. Each of these understands the means of the people becoming a nation to be different, but they do not differ in their emphasis on the nation’s role in constituting a “people.” For a critique of the Gramscian undertones of this schema from a contemporary Marxist perspective, see Jon Beasley-Murray.

does the literature by and about the colonized appear? Is literature in Spanish by Malay Filipinos (and even this category's racialization is problematic) who are subject to the Spanish empire a part of Hispanic letters or Philippine letters? Both? Neither? What of the Spanish-language production of Malay Filipinos under the American regime following 1898?¹⁸ What of texts from Puerto Rico, the government of which has continued under non-identical rule since the sixteenth century, first under the Spanish empire, and up to the present-day under the predominantly Anglophone United States? Is Puerto Rican culture after the United States invasion a continued development of the Spanish culture implanted in the 15th century, as Antonio Pedreira claimed (25)? Are English-language texts from the island—in their proximity to the Anglophone representative regime of the mainland—more “Puerto Rican” (and therefore more “literary”) than texts in Spanish, or vice-versa? Or can no texts from the island be truly “literary” in this account, given that Puerto Rico’s highest level of governmental representation is a non-voting (non-self-determined) member of the United States House of Representatives?

This study assumes that the absurdity of such questions manifests the inadequacy of contemporary theories of world literature, since they presume the transparency of the subject of literary production and national belonging. As soon as this assumption is abandoned, new possibilities for world literature arise that are no longer born dead. Commonplace terms in the institutionalization of textual analysis can be reexamined through the distinction between language-literature and literature (as a system of systems). My starting point is the Spivakian notion of value (derived from a particular reading of Marx), which Noel Castree has called a “textuality of value,” which relies on the notion that “bringing certain things into view depends on the *active displacement* and marginalization of other things to which they are connected”

¹⁸ Adam Lifshey asks very similar questions to these regarding Spanish-language literature by ethnically Filipino and Equatoguinean authors (*Magellan*).

(Castree 49, emphasis in original). Conventional discourses of value, in this account, act as various catachresis that “gather up unassimilable diversity into an exploitative global political economy” (74, emphasis in original). I contend that by examining texts that have been difficult to assimilate into normative accounts of literary history (i.e. texts that have not entered into the system [A] of literature) due to the contingencies of their historical appearance, the field of world literature will be revealed for its founding impossibility: the impossibility of representing the globe as a world. The texts examined in this dissertation are all texts that expose the catachresis of value at the heart of the modern subject, whose organizing principle is the capacity for judgment itself. These texts’ exposure of this catachresis makes them difficult to assimilate in canons and criticism that take as their basis the constitution of the modern subject in either an idealist or a materialist mode. They are texts that do not make sense. They do not make sense because, in the present conjuncture of aesthetic capitalism, their foregrounding of the disproportion between subjects and objects is not intelligible. The task of world literature, then, would be to recuperate these texts to the extent and in the form that they *resist* incorporation into conventions of sense- and value-making.¹⁹ Only in retaining their difference might a discipline of world *literatures* be born that does not reduce the catachresis of value that structures global inequality to a homogenizing discipline of world *literature*, a discipline that tends toward being realized only as it destroys itself (Auerbach 254). Presuming, interrogating, and critiquing the catachresis of value on which theories of world literature have heretofore been based may help break the discipline of the aesthetic-imperial regime (to riff off Rancière) to which it has, so far, succumbed.

¹⁹ This project therefore has affinities with Emily Apter’s recent *Against World Literature*, although her emphasis is on translation theory as the underlying principle (for and) against world literature, rather than the theory of value that I see as primary.

The chapters of this dissertation are organized around four key moments that I will argue structure the experience of the literary within and following the production of an aesthetic-imperial regime in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The first chapter lays out the problematic of an aesthetic-imperial regime in more detail, while linking this problematic to contemporary theories of “world literature” emanating from the United States academy. The second chapter discusses the development of a concept of culture yoked to forms of belonging in Manuel Alonso’s *El gíbaro* (1849) and Puerto Rican letters following Alonso’s milestone work. Culture, this chapter argues, is developed as a way of organizing the colonial situation into spheres of governability as the Spanish empire transitions from a prior form of sovereignty to the forms of biopolitical governmentality that structure modern power. The third chapter analyzes the role of temporality within the discourse of aesthetics. This chapter argues that the presumed universality of aesthetic experience in modernity is structured on a non-synchronous time that is unevenly distributed across the globe. The primary texts in this chapter are short stories in a *costumbrista* style by Spanish writers that depict the Philippines and its customs as outside of a normative, modern Spanish imperial culture. The fourth chapter interrogates the concept of identity as it becomes a fetish of subjectivity in the transition from the aesthetic-imperial regime of Spanish empire to that of the United States in Puerto Rico. I examine *El negocio* (*The Business*, 1922), by Manuel Zeno Gandía, in order to argue that the subject’s submission to the common sense of aesthetics in modernity grounds imperial power in reified identities (as the self, alienated in the other) that supplement and supplant subjectivity as a reflexive consciousness, its supposed ground since Descartes (Karatani 81-130). The fifth and final chapter examines how a concept of the world supplements the impossibility of self-sufficiency within the aesthetic-imperial regime of the Philippines after the transition to the imperial sphere of the United States. It does so by

looking at how Spanish-American *modernismo* came to provide an alibi for the loss of a particularly Fil-Hispanic world in the Philippines heralded by the shift to an English-language educational system. The years 1910-11 mark a high-tide for my study here, as the release of the Spanish-language, *modernista* novel, *Bancarrota de almas* (*Bankruptcy of Souls*), by Jesús Balmori, coincides in this period with the more psychologically realist novel, in Tagalog, *Sa ñgalan ng Diyos* (*In the Name of God*), by Faustino Aguilar. These four scenes—of culture, temporality, identity, and worlding—I argue, structure an experience of the literary that, while deriving from a prior imperial culture, continues to affect contemporary concepts of literature across the globe and within the United States academy. As a result, many current theories of world literature end up recapitulating the terms of inclusion and exclusion that have produced and sustained modern forms of imperial power. To break with this legacy, the academic discipline of world literatures must confront its own premise of “literariness” and stake out a new analysis of power as it imagines and creates worlds.

Chapter One: Aesthetics, Empire, and World Literature

Valuation as a real psychological occurrence is part of the natural world; but what we mean by valuation, its conceptual meaning, is something independent of this world; is not part of it, but is rather the whole world viewed from a particular vantage point. (Simmel 60)

Introduction

The discipline of literature has frequently incorporated the discourse of aesthetics through readings of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790, second edition in 1793). Also known as the *Third Critique*, Kant's text is an attempt to synthesize his prior two critiques, the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781 (second edition in 1787) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* of 1788. While the *First Critique* interrogated how thought is produced through the rules of nature itself, thus subjecting Reason to the heteronomous order of that which is given to the subject by nature, the *Second Critique* sought to explain the experience of freedom that arises from moral action. The *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is meant as a reconciliation of the contradiction that emerges between these two earlier works, namely the experience of freedom by a subject whose rules of thinking are formed by the laws that nature forces upon the subject and how, therefore, the subject can cognize freedom. This is achieved (at least in Kant's mind) by locating the source of judgment about objects in the manner in which they affect the subject. Kant's central case in this argument is beauty, which, he insists, is a subjective judgment of an

object which the subject experiences as universally valid (*CPJ* 98). In other words, beauty is “an effect of the object on the subject, rather than a synthesis by the subject” (Bowie 26). In this third part of his critical philosophical system, Kant is concerned with how the individual recognizes itself as both a subject of law (the laws of nature) and a subject of action (that is, as free).

For Kant, this self-realization is achieved through the experience of judgment-making. The first part of this treatise concerns itself with aesthetic judgment, which serves the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as an imperfect analogy for moral judgments. Aesthetics, in this text, unifies sensate experience through the faculty of “taste,” a medium that precedes the understanding in examination of an object of experience, and yet which seems to have recourse to the understanding in its formation. Thus, this foundational text for the study of aesthetics, attempts to define “two kinds of beauty, namely free and dependent beauty, where free beauty presupposes no concept of what the object should be and dependent beauty does presuppose such a concept” (Kuehn 346). Free beauty, as the name implies, is a judgment of an object based on the perception of its having purpose without knowing what that purpose is, that is, without knowing why it was willed into being. This is what Kant calls “purposiveness . . . without an end” (*CPJ* 105), and might apply to a sculpture, a symphony, or a meadow on a summer’s day. Dependent beauty, on the other hand, is a judgment of an object based on a concept of its intent, such as one might say of a hammer, a hot dog, or a treatise on aesthetics. (Of course, all of the latter objects, too, would have a moment in which the subject encountered them aesthetically, a moment that precedes the revelation of their utility for pounding, eating, and philosophizing, respectively.)

The elision of these two kinds of beauty erases the crucial distinction between the “free beauty” of nature and the “dependent beauty” of art, a distinction that has led to a history of

uncomfortable (but inescapable) conclusions about hierarchies in the arts. Within this hierarchy, literature has always ranked highly and the literary has come to be the defining feature of literature's artistic promise. In an interview in the 1980s, Jacques Derrida sought to separate this concept of art—what might be called “literature under the law”—from the more modern formulation of literature as the “authorization to say everything,” which cannot be separated from “what calls forth democracy” (“This Strange” 37). Derrida opposes this second concept, what he calls “the institution of literature in the West, in its relatively modern form,” to the tradition of “belles-lettres [and] poetry” (37). Yet Derrida's assertion that the “institution of literature in the West” gives “*in principle* the power to say everything, to break free of the rules” (37, emphasis in original), seems to rely on the very same hierarchy of the representation of freedom that subsists in Kant and which Derrida himself had critiqued.¹ As I will demonstrate below, it is the institutionalization of “freedom” in aesthetic discourse and its dialectic relationship to the tradition of *belles-lettres* that produces the concept of “literary value” up to the present day.

The confusion over how freedom and tradition structure each other in the production of literature as an institution no doubt stems in part from Kant himself, who wrote that “[t]he **art of poetry** . . . claims the highest rank of all [the arts]” (203, emphasis in the original). Since art is a representation of freedom to the subject, this would seem to place poetry as the most free, the most capable of “say[ing] everything.” Yet, when literary critics focus on Kant's detailed discussion of how the subjective experience of sensory stimulation can come to claim a universal validity that seems to adhere to the object of the experience, they tend to misrecognize that it is

¹ Derrida critiques the Kantian distinction between free and dependent beauties in “Economimesis,” which I discuss below.

nature's laws that determine the freedom that is represented.² The indistinction between nature and art in Kant is crucial to understanding how political economy in imperial settings has structured literary value and how the category of literature that arose in this crucial moment also made contemporary forms of imperialism imaginable. Only by fleshing out this relationship of Kant's aesthetics to other cultural phenomena outside of art—such as economics, education, or the nation-state—can a full seizure of “aesthetics” be possible. For these cultural domains, the concepts and manifestations of culture that constitute the subject's daily experiences are equally predicated on its ability to make judgments, as in the critique of art. What is more, the judgments of literary scholars have frequently been articulated through a Kantian vocabulary whose overlap with the discourse of economics has been ignored or taken for granted since before Georg Simmel wrote *The Philosophy of Money* in 1907, which went a long way in clarifying the connections between the language of idealist aesthetic philosophy and the language of monetary economics. It is now difficult to imagine anything within the contemporary culture of the Global North that is not shot through with what John Guillory has called “the discourse of value” (281), which was inaugurated in the eighteenth century through the simultaneous rise of global capitalism and the branch of philosophical inquiry that Kant and those critics in his wake have called “aesthetics.”

The purpose of this chapter is to expose how the shared structure of valuation in aesthetic judgment and capitalist exchange develops in the nineteenth century through the uneven distribution of modern subjects (predicated on their labor's “freedom”) across the geographic globe. An examination of this structure reveals that, inasmuch as literary inquiries are located in the realm of the aesthetic as a discourse on art, they are located at the cultural center of empire

² Some examples of this include Barbara Herrnstein Smith (64-72), John Guillory (269-340), and Terry Eagleton (70-101).

and are complicit in producing the hierarchies on which the geographies of capital rest. As a result, the study of literature—to the extent that it is the study of the “literary”—is a means of systematically ordering cultural inequalities and domination, particularly, as I will demonstrate below, through the modern subject’s relationship to the nation and the world.

Aesthetics and Community in Kant’s *Third Critique*

The modern study of aesthetics bases itself in great measure—whether it is acknowledged or not—on Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and its discussion of free and dependent beauty, as I have already mentioned. The purpose of the *Third Critique* is to expose the attribution of characteristics to objects to be the result of the subject’s perception of objects as “a purposive arrangement of nature in a system, as it were for the benefit of our power of judgment” (*CPJ* 17). A subject’s sense of natural objects as having a purpose that can be recognized merely by the form of their appearance—a recognition that Kant calls an object’s “purposiveness”—is posited by how the object affects an individual as a subject, not by the objects themselves, nor merely by subjective imposition upon the object. An object does not claim any purpose to which the subject must agree; rather it is the subject’s judgments about them, based on their appearance to the subject, that presume this purposiveness.

Purposiveness does not exist in the objects themselves, however, nor as the product of one’s own reasoning, i.e. that because a subject perceives formal unity in an object he or she reasons that there is purpose in the object’s mere existence. Rather, the burden of the critique that Kant carries out is to demonstrate that the concept of purposiveness is “a special concept of the reflecting power of judgment, not of reason; for the end is not posited in the object at all, but strictly in the subject and indeed in its mere capacity for reflecting” (*CPJ* 19). Reflecting, in this

instance, means that the purposiveness of objects is arrived at through what Kant calls the “free play” of the cognitive faculties of imagination and understanding and not through the application of understanding to the object (*CPJ* 103).³ The pleasure experienced in an aesthetic judgment, Kant claims, is a pleasure derived from “[t]he animation of both faculties (the imagination and the understanding) to an activity that is indeterminate but yet, through the stimulus of the given representation, in unison;” such an activity, Kant concludes, “belongs to a cognition in general, [and] is the sensation whose universal communicability is postulated by the judgment of taste” (*CPJ* 104). Aesthetic judgment is, then, a form of judgment that underlies the production of all cognition, as new concepts are first derived from their encounter in objects that prompt a “free play” without determination.

But Kant’s concern with aesthetics as a free play of the imagination and understanding and the “reflecting judgment” that it creates is not merely a self-centered discourse; it is one shot through with the needs of humans as social beings. Thus Kant claims that “if cognitions are to be able to be communicated, then the mental state, i.e. the disposition of the cognitive powers for a cognition in general, . . . must also be capable of being universally communicated” (*CPJ* 122). His concern with aesthetic judgment is precisely his concern to find the grounds for the communicability of concepts, to answer the question, how are subjects capable of coming to agreement on the qualities of things? The reflecting judgment into which the subject is thrown when he or she encounters the appearance of objects as a formal unity is the grounds of communication for Kant, as this reflecting produces the appearance of the subject to itself as a

³ The understanding in Kant’s critical philosophy is itself a product of experience and pure reason. See *CPuR* 205, where Kant states that “the **understanding** in general can be represented as a **faculty for judging**. For according to what has been said above it is a faculty for thinking. Thinking is cognition through concepts. Concepts, however, as predicates of possible judgments, are related to some representation of a still undetermined object” (emphasis in original). This passage—written more than ten years before the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*—both presages the *Third Critique* and makes a constant torment to Kant scholars the distinctions there adumbrated between the operations of the understanding, those of the imagination, and those of “pure judgment.”

subject capable of freedom. This freedom (which I discuss below) is recognizable in the “free play” itself, the state into which the imagination and the understanding are thrown by the encounter with an object to which no definitive purpose (but only purposiveness) can be ascribed.

The next step is tricky, but, for Kant, indispensable. In order to presume to make an aesthetic judgment into a simple predication (i.e. “this is beautiful”), the subject must demand a universal assent to his or her judgment, that anyone encountering the same object will make the same judgment (i.e. “this is beautiful”). This is because the perception of the object as beautiful—though it is purely subjective and based in the “free play” of the imagination and the understanding—presents itself as a quality of the object itself: the subject judges a thing beautiful “not merely for himself, but for everyone, and speaks of beauty *as if* it were a property of things” (*CPJ* 98, emphasis added). This is in contrast to the states of mind associated with the agreeableness of objects or their goodness, which are respectively a liking conditioned as a response to certain stimuli (e.g. the sun is agreeable for its warmth) and a liking determined not by the presentation of the object (as in aesthetic judgment), but in its connection to the subject, i.e. to its utility (e.g. the sun is good because it warms me) (cf. *CPJ* 91-96).

This universal assent, then, presumes what Kant calls a “common sense,” a sensorium that must be shared by others in order for the subject’s judgments to make sense (or to be sensible). Hannah Arendt called this the “community sense” (71), since its function is to allow (and, in fact, require) the communicability of sense impressions through the representation of pleasure/displeasure. This shared sensorium that is presumed by aesthetic judgments does not mean that anyone *will* share a given subject’s aesthetic judgment that “object *x* is beautiful,” merely that they *ought to*, that, in order for a judgment to be “aesthetic,” the subject *demand*s

that they do so. Such a presumed sensorium is thus distinct from communities of taste, or what Kant calls “the common understanding that is sometimes also called common sense (*sensus communis*), since the latter judges not by feeling but always by concepts, although commonly only in the form of obscurely represented principles” (*CPJ* 122). Thus while a presentation of objects to the understanding that results in a “free play” of the faculties can reveal to the subject the communicable ground of judgment in general, it cannot directly invoke concepts such as “perfection,” which is an appeal to the understanding in itself and therefore unrelated to the formal presentation of objects that is the realm of beauty properly called (*CPJ* 111-13). What aesthetics can do, however, is provide a theoretical ground for universality in which all subjects encounter objects as formal unities whose presentation as such prompts the imagination and the understanding to enter into “free play.”

The universality that Kant’s “common sense” of aesthetic judgment invokes arises at almost the exact same time as the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* of 1789, which Étienne Balibar sees as the essential document in the expansion of universality to the social sphere. It does this through founding the freedom of the subject on the premise of innate equality, rather than on the hierarchy of privileges that structured European societies up to that point. Freedom after the *Declaration* of 1789 is an “unlimited or, more precisely, self-limited freedom: having no limits other than those it assigns to itself in order to respect the rule of equality” (“Citizen” 45). The subject of this freedom, the citizen, is now figured as “becoming-a-subject,” a process of continual self-subjection (or subjection to the self), and it is only by this means “that universality could come to the subject” (45). Such universality, however, as it is imminent to the social body (every citizen is equal with respect to the totality), is necessarily

limited to its society, and thus exclusive (50).⁴

Universality as embodied in the *Declaration* of 1789 is why, for Arendt, Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is central to his political philosophy. For in the "self-limiting" that Balibar discusses, the subject of Kantian aesthetic philosophy peeks through once more. As stated above, the universal assent of Kant's aesthetics does not hold true for everyone even as it predicates their agreement. To put it in terms of politics, "one can never compel anyone to agree with one's judgments. . . ; one can only 'woo' or 'court' the agreement of everyone else. And in this persuasive activity one actually appeals to the 'community sense'" (Arendt 72). It is, in other words, a question of the equality of subjects as social subjects not in a condition of domination or hegemony.

Universality is thus also a question of intersubjectivity. As Arendt continues, "one can communicate only if one is able to think from the other person's standpoint; otherwise one will never meet him, never speak in such a way that he understands" (74). At the precise moment that equality is experienced as intersubjectivity, that is, the accessibility of other viewpoints to one's own, exclusivity returns. Communication from another's standpoint requires not just a common sense (community sense), but a common language, common cultures, and political equality. Kant insists that it is in the nature of the human habitation of the globe that this exclusivity must be capable of being overcome: "[B]y virtue of their common possession of the earth, where, as a globe, they cannot infinitely disperse and hence must finally tolerate the presence of each other" (qtd. in Arendt 75). The globe, however, is constituted as a world of universality in the moment of capitalism's great expansion across the geographic space of the earth and the whole world's coming under what Carl Schmitt called "the *nomos* of the earth."

⁴ In a comparison between Toussaint Louverture's 1801 *Constitution* for Haiti and the *Declaration* and its successors in France, Lorelle D. Semley demonstrates how Balibar's exclusivity was inscribed in French colonial politics; see especially Semley 67-73.

Universal but self-limiting, equal but exclusive: these are the contradictions that have plagued aesthetic thought since the late eighteenth century. This is because aesthetic judgment is not anything to which one can or cannot consent, but rather the basic structure of encounter of the subject in its freedom (Balibar's "citizen subject") with an object. Aesthetic judgment is the initial moment of encountering an object in which one can recognize his or her freedom through the experience of pleasure: "An object of inclination and one that is imposed upon us by a law of reason for the sake of desire leave us no freedom to make anything into an object of pleasure ourselves" (Kant, *CPJ* 95). The ability to choose as the purpose of an object the pleasure it produces in the subject—a pleasure that one claims as the "free play" of the cognitive faculties—is a freedom of consent or dissent that is only available when the subject recognizes itself to be free to judge, a non-coerced consent unlike that imposed by reason or custom.

But this recognition of freedom is a fleeting thing, for since aesthetic judgment for Kant demands the agreement of others as to an object's beauty due to the sharing of a common sense, it is not at the level of common sense that agreement on the beautiful actually occurs. For

a faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of everyone else's way of representing in thought, in order *as it were* to hold its judgment up to human reason as a whole and thereby avoid the illusion which, from subjective private conditions that could easily be held to be objective, would have a detrimental influence on the judgment. (*CPJ* 173-74, emphasis in original)

The power to judge aesthetically is thus a power of comparison "not so much to the actual as to the merely possible judgments of others" (*CPJ* 174), a power that places the subject in the unenviable position of having to deny its own material sensation in order for judgment to shed the limitations of subjectivity. Curiously, then, the moment in which the subject recognizes his or

her freedom as a subject is the same moment in which subjectivity itself is threatened by the necessity of adopting the positions of others in order to claim objective (universal) validity for one's judgments. This subjective universal, as it might be called, cannot occur in actuality in the common sense, where it is only a conditional premise ("as it were"). It occurs only in practice at the level of the "common understanding" and therefore within the space of culture, not within the sensorium.

The world of others (other possibilities, other exchanges, other subjects) cannot be verified through aesthetic judgment alone. Rather, it is through aesthetic judgment that the subject enters the common understanding, but it is in the common understanding that the aesthetic experience is trained and cultivated. In Kant's critique, the common understanding seems to be given by nature, but it is given only as a predisposition, "the development of which we owe to ourselves and for which we must thank ourselves. What we are now has not been given to us but has been achieved by our own making" (Cheah, *Spectral* 76). Aesthetic judgment arises through giving form to the subject's natural inclinations of reason and freedom, and it is for this reason that the state has, for some time, invested in an aesthetic education (particularly in national literatures, such as English) that is at the same time a "cultural" education.⁵ For it is through acculturation that subjects are rendered into a collective capable of dynamic self-organization. This education "changes the state by strengthening the ties between it and its citizens. Through its relation to culture, the state becomes organicized" (94). It is thus a very particular kind of cultivation, which, in its links to the state, is delimited by territory and population. As one example, the cultural education of France and the French overseas colonies may be quite distinct from that of

⁵ Ian Hunter, in *Culture and Government*, makes a similar argument, though through a Foucauldian understanding of power and genealogy. David Lloyd and Paul Thomas, in *Culture and the State*, tend toward a more pessimistic view that sees "culture" as a state-building ideology. Both, however, tend to elide the imperial histories in which this process of the state's organicization is temporally enmeshed.

Great Britain and its colonial empire, or, for that matter, the postcolonial states that arose largely after World War II.⁶ As a result, what “quicken” aesthetic judgment may be determined not only by the formal purposiveness that is experienced in a pure aesthetic judgment, but by its connection to the understanding as it is overdetermined by concepts that must, in turn, be tied to particular habits of presentation developed in the educational setting.

Here Kant’s discussion of “beautiful art” (*schöne Kunst*) is illuminating. Kant distinguishes between natural beauty and artistic beauty inconsistently throughout the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment,” the first part of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. As a result of this inconsistency, a number of contemporary commentators overlook or disavow this distinction.⁷ But I would uphold that the distinction between these two domains and what judgments about them mean is in fact necessary to understand how Kant’s project has given rise to contemporary norms of aesthetic evaluation. Unlike in pure aesthetic judgment, Kant insists that “in the judging of the beauty of art the perfection of the thing will also have to be taken into account” since “if the object is given as a product of art, . . . then, since art always presupposes an end in the cause (and its causality), a concept must first be the ground of what the thing is supposed to be” (*CPJ* 190). Art appears as the product of *techne*, that is “the capacity to produce in a purposive way” (Bowie 24), and this *techne* arises from nature but is not claimed totally by it. Kant sums this position up with the problematic claim that a “beauty of nature is a *beautiful thing*; the beauty of art is a *beautiful representation* of a thing” (*CPJ* 189, emphasis in original).

⁶ A classic scene of such a culturally bound education and its role in the construction of colonial mentalities is in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, where he discusses the identification of the Caribbean black subject with “our ancestors, the Gauls” (189-90).

⁷ See for example Eagleton, Jan Mieszkowski and Donald Crawford. Paul Guyer, in *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, explicitly refutes Kant’s distinction of artistic and natural beauty (235-39), linking the ability to say a painting is beautiful as well as a flower to the notion that these must have the same basis “as long as judgments on any of these claim intersubjective validity for subjective responses” (239). As I shall argue below, this is to assume that communities of taste that rely on a common understanding are the same as the world of human response that relies merely on a shared set of sensational responses (“common sense”), a distinction that is not maintained throughout the *Third Critique*, but that surfaces there repeatedly nonetheless.

Thus the work of art, in and as it is recognized as being represented in an artistic medium (painting, sculpture, music, etc.), is perceived initially *as* art and therefore an intentional representation of what Kant calls an “aesthetic idea” (*CPJ* 192-95). As it represents the products of nature, it also represents that which transcends nature, i.e. Reason and Freedom, both, in Kant’s philosophy, supersensible (beyond the sensible realm, that is, only known through Reason). As Beth Lord describes it, artistic objects such as poems and paintings, in their production of a “fiction,” “present aspects of experience with a ‘completeness’ toward which reason strives but that is not found in experience itself” (47). Fictions thus “give reason the opportunity to think these transcendent thoughts without the temptation to make knowledge claims about them” (47). The aesthetic idea, as the fiction that lurks within Kant’s discussion of art, comes to supplement experience. The flipside of the understanding’s inability to reveal the thing-in-itself, art is not limited to itself, but points towards something beyond the sensible world, to the limits of humans as rational beings.

The key to this problem of “beautiful art” in the *Third Critique*, which in turn has been perhaps the most “historically influential” part of the text (Guyer 351), is the “aesthetic idea.” Kant’s definition of the aesthetic idea is vague, but it does clearly reject a conception of aesthetic judgment that would rest solely on the formal presentation of an object: “by an aesthetic idea . . . I mean that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e. **concept**, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible” (*CPJ* 192, emphasis in original). Aesthetic ideas are those non-conceptual supersensible things that understanding cannot grasp, but which nonetheless are experienced as real by the subject, ideas such as freedom itself. Following this, Kant makes it clear that aesthetic ideas primarily come to the subject

through symbolism and metaphor:

Those forms which do not constitute the presentation of a given concept itself, but, as supplementary representations of the imagination, express only the implications connected with it and its affinity with others, are called (aesthetic) **attributes** of an object whose concept, as an idea of reason, cannot be adequately presented. . . . [T]hey yield an **aesthetic idea**, which serves that idea of reason instead of a logical presentation, although really only to animate the mind by opening up for it the prospect of an immeasurable field of related representations. (*CPJ* 193, emphasis in original)

In other words, in a work of art what is judged as beautiful is not only the formal presentation itself, but how “perfect” the presentation of the aesthetic idea is (*CPJ* 193-95). (Kant insists that these must be tied to the concept of utility and that they are therefore not pure aesthetic judgments, since they are contaminated by concepts [*CPJ* 111]). In other words, art is “beautiful” to Kant not only in its presentation or form, but in how this form represents its content. As Paul Guyer puts it, “Kant’s .conception of aesthetic ideas implies nothing less than that in responding to a work of art we respond in a properly aesthetic manner to both its form and its content and to the relation between them, all of which induce the free play of the cognitive faculties and thus the feeling of beauty” (359).

To explain this further, Kant provides a curious example that yields a better understanding of what role this all plays in the production of a “common understanding”: in discussing the “aesthetic attribute” and its partial representation of a rational idea, Kant mentions that “[t]hus Jupiter’s eagle, with the lightning in its claws, is an attribute of the powerful king of heaven, as is the peacock of the splendid queen of heaven” (*CPJ* 193). The association of these deities with

terrestrial creatures and, in turn, the interpretation of this association as the presentation of a rational concept such as “power” or “splendidness,” cannot have an inherent basis, but rather must be built up through experiential association linked to culturally bound education. Thus such “aesthetic attributes,” which are based on a symbolic lexicon, must be *a posteriori* and cultivated, and the aesthetic idea for which these attributes serve as a base must likewise be learned, not inherent to human cognition.

This explanation of the aesthetic attribute’s role in schematizing the aesthetic departs significantly from Guyer’s interpretation of the *Third Critique*, since Guyer does not distinguish what makes “beautiful art” (*schöne Kunst*) art, that is, its status as *Kunst*. Since “Kunst” connotes the purposive design of a product of human reflection, it is separable from nature, if only in that it is the reflection of nature via the hands of humans. Though this seems a superficial point, the implications are profound. If Kant was at pains before to focus on how aesthetics constructs the presumption of a community in the very basis of an aesthetic judgment (i.e. that which I say is beautiful must be beautiful to all postulated others), this cannot be true of the aesthetic idea or the artistic object in which such an idea is represented, as these are built of “aesthetic attributes” that are culturally bound: symbols, myths, associations. If the eagle represents the supersensible power of Zeus (that is, his divine power), it is possible for a person outside of the cultural community that associates “eagle” with “power” to misrecognize or even to be unable to recognize such a symbol as representative of the supersensible.⁸ Were this person to then judge that such depictions were merely mimetic reproductions of nature without access to Reason’s furthest bounds of freedom, they would be much in the position of the colonizer’s

⁸ One of the more humorous anecdotes about this is Benjamin Franklin’s notorious distaste for the bald eagle, though the letter to his daughter in which he compared the eventual National Bird to the turkey can probably be chalked up as much to contrariness as “taste,” per se. The bald eagle, Franklin wrote, “is a Bird of bad moral Character. . . . Besides he is a rank coward: The little King Bird not bigger than a Sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district” (qtd. in Stamp).

disdain for “native” practices that appear to fetishize the everyday and merely imitate the culture of the colonizer (and, therefore, merely imitate the “freedom” that culture is seen to represent).⁹ Thus it is revealed that part of art’s beauty is recognized through a shared symbolic order with very real limits. Kant’s theories suggest that art is beautiful to the extent that it interpellates a *particular* subject who has already been cultivated to recognize and respond to a set of symbolic representations.

What is more, that which can be and is communicated in an aesthetic judgment is not an object itself, but merely its representation. In fact, in their representation to the subject, aesthetic objects become communally intelligible through their indeterminacy, that is, they become intelligible to the extent that they articulate the individual subject’s limits with the freedom of subjectivity itself. Value appears as a disproportion in this disjunctive space between a subject’s limits and subjectivity’s freedom, the super-adequacy of the subject to itself (i.e. the subject’s ability to make itself as a subject). For Marx, one of the key insights into the commodity form was to recognize that the form of value that it represented did not derive directly from the labor necessary to form it, but that such labor appeared *as if* it belonged to the commodity itself. Value only appears, then, “as a congelation of human labour, . . . as being a something materially different” from itself as use-value (i.e. as linen, iron, etc.) (*Capital* 1:59). A commodity becomes “valuable” when it has become a moment in a chain of exchange, that is, when value appears as an objective quality of the object distinct from the materiality of the object itself. Value, as exchange-value, Guillory argues, forms in the “disproportion between production and consumption” (314), that is, along the circuit of exchange. Aesthetic value thus arises as a disjuncture between the subject and its own realization as subjectivity, the subject as “super-

⁹ On the discourse of mimicry and the cultivation of civilization in Puerto Rico and the Philippines, see Chapters Two and Three. Vicente Rafael examines colonial mimicry in “White Love: Census and Melodrama in the U.S. Colonization of the Philippines” (34-35).

adequate” to itself in its intersubjective constitution, which can recognize itself as a part of a whole (Spivak, “Scattered” 155). It is for this very reason that the “aura” of the artwork—its sense of being prepared in advance for the viewer themselves—as the unique quality of an artwork’s existence comes to be understood as “scarcity” within post-Enlightenment economic discourse, for capitalist ideology renders it as a product of labor outside of the economy of work (Guillory 314-15).¹⁰ As will be argued throughout the rest of this dissertation, this value can be mapped as distributed across a geographic spread over time, with aesthetics thus the medium in which the subject experiences itself as related to the world. Aesthetic value is thus determined by the thickest set of posited relations (as subjectivity) that has as its implicit but invisible base the hierarchically distributed processes of production and consumption (as subject) of the globe. As will become evident, this can be seen in the homologous structures of commodity exchange and literary production, rooted as they both are in the colonial construction of the world.

The World of Commodities, the World of Aesthetics

In aesthetic judgment, as Terry Eagleton has explained, “we can experience our shared humanity with all the immediacy of our response to a fine painting or magnificent symphony [i.e. in our sense impressions –WA]. Paradoxically, it is in the apparently most private, frail and intangible aspects of our lives that we blend most harmoniously with one another” (76). If one encounters an artistic object only as an individual, it nonetheless suggests the transcendence of the individual encounter, as the responses thus provoked are experienced as directly called into being by the object itself. Thus the subject’s feeling that the object requires of it a certain response prompts the reason to propose this response as the appropriate one for any individual

¹⁰ Cf. Walter Benjamin (“The Work” 220-24) and Terry Eagleton (*The Ideology* 78). For further discussion of Benjamin’s concept of the “aura” within imperial culture, see my Chapter Two, below.

encountering the work. It is thus in the most private experience of beauty that one feels most intelligible to others, and, inversely, at the most intersubjective and communal moment that individuality is most affirmed. In this, Eagleton notes, “this formal, desensualized aesthetic object, which acts as a point of exchange between subjects, can be read as a kind of spiritualized version of the very commodity it resists” (78). As the flipside of the commodity, the aesthetic object’s recognition as an aesthetic object depends on the subject’s ability to posit a world of cultural relations: a world of possible judgments, exchanges, and subjects.¹¹

As discussed above, Guillory notes that, even as early as Marx’s *Grundrisse* (written in the late 1850s, though not published until the middle of the twentieth century), the “work of art” appears as a necessary “disproportion” in the production-consumption cycle, a disproportion that provokes the very desires that commodity production seeks to assuage (Guillory 321). This desire is experienced as a specifically *aesthetic value*, Guillory continues, to the point where “if it were possible to think of the aesthetic without also thinking of value, we would in effect have discarded the concept of the ‘work of art’ as we know it. For that object is by definition the embodiment of a quantum of aesthetic value” (322). What can be called “art” within the modern conception of art is thus that object which is perceived to contain aesthetic value as an aspect of its very existence. This is a far cry from Kant’s discussion of pure aesthetic judgment and its role in allowing the subject to place itself in relation to a posited community via common sense. As value becomes the operative term for the discussion of subject-formation, judgment becomes the instrumentalization of the subject to liberal political economy.

It is in this respect that Eagleton can claim that “the category of the aesthetic assumes the importance it does in modern Europe because, in speaking of art, it speaks of these other matters too [e.g. freedom, spontaneity, necessity, autonomy, particularity and universality, etc.], which

¹¹ For more on this definition of “world,” see Pheng Cheah, “What Is a World? On World.”

are at the heart of the middle class's struggle for political hegemony" (*The Ideology* 3). The aesthetic domain annexes the relation of the subject to its environment and to other subjects, thus becoming the foundation for the modern conception of the political. Eagleton calls this its essential paradox, as aesthetics simultaneously "offers a generous utopian image of reconciliation" and "blocks and mystifies the real political movement towards such historical community" (9). However, because of the historicity of the community, it undercuts the possibility of reconciliation, for as demonstrated above, the world becomes constituted through a cultural education that both depends on and helps to constitute a delimited social space.

The filiations of Eagleton's critique and Guillory's exegesis with Kant's own thought can still be seen, particularly through the latter's discussion of "Kunst" as labor. In "Economimesis," Derrida argues that Kant places "genius" as the principle between nature's productivity and the products of human labor, between *tekhnè* and *physis*. In Kant's view, according to Derrida, "[o]ne must not imitate nature; but nature, assigning its rules to genius, folds itself, returns to itself, reflects itself through art" (4). Art and its predication, "genius," thus serves as a point of exchange—"the production of freedom by means of freedom" (5)—that can define human freedom as a product of nature without subjecting it to mechanistic law. To be art—that is, to represent freedom—human labor must escape all heteronomous influences, including those of material remuneration: "art in general . . . cannot be reduced to craft [*Handwerk*]. The latter exchanges the value of its work against a salary; it is a mercenary art [*Lohnkunst*]" and is therefore less "art" in its essence (5). Because it is paid, mercenary art stands in distinction to the enjoyment that the true artist can gain from the "play" that characterizes their production, and the mercenary artist is characterized by their labor being experienced as "non-enjoyment." The relation between these two figures is co-constitutive in Derrida's analysis, and, "since we are

dealing here with a hierarchy inside of a general organization governed by the universal law of nature, the non-enjoyment of the mercenary artist (his work) serves the cause of liberal enjoyment” (6). Within the modern world, production’s economimetic character thus not only produces art as distinct from other forms of mere work, but also produces work’s producers (laborers) as hierarchized in the proportion of their enjoyment to their labor. Labor as enjoyment (i.e. subject-formation) necessitates labor as exchangeability (i.e. commodification), but the two must retain a rigorous distinction in Kant’s scheme. This distinction is premised on a hierarchy metonymically related to the distinction between capitalist and worker in Marx’s account.¹² To the extent that capitalism is premised on the division of labor across the whole globe,¹³ the distribution of “liberal” or “free” art and “mercenary” art is therefore predicated on an imperialist vision of the world.

In the introduction to *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said proposes that the term “culture” be reread through the history of imperialism that structures its rise to discursive prominence in the nineteenth century (xii). He does this through proposing two definitions of culture that are not exclusive of each other. The first, as Said describes it, refers to “all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms,” by which he largely means pleasure-giving forms (xii). This is “culture” in the anthropological vein, and includes the products of the academic disciplines of “ethnography, historiography, philology, sociology, and literary history” (xii). The second definition is of culture as “a concept

¹² See, for example, Marx’s discussion of capitalist “abstinence” in the first volume of *Capital*: “the private expenditure of the capitalist is placed on the debtor side of his account against his capital. To accumulate, [therefore,] is to conquer the world of social wealth, to increase the mass of human beings exploited by him, and thus to extend both the direct and the indirect sway of the capitalist” (649). See also Jean Baudrillard’s critique of value as a symbolic system in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*.

¹³ Rosa Luxemburg was perhaps the earliest articulator of the dependency of capitalist accumulation in the so-called “core” on the dispossession and incorporation of non-capitalist economies across the entire globe. See the third section of *The Accumulation of Capital* (307-447).

that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought, as Matthew Arnold put it in the 1860s" (xiii). As Said points out, this second definition of culture, though meant as a way of cultivating that which could relieve the pressures of "a modern, aggressive, mercantile, and brutalizing urban existence," came over time "to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state, this differentiates 'us' [i.e. those who have produced these 'great works' -WA] from 'them,' almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that" (xiii). In its formation through shared, historical community, Said's second definition of culture appears to be an intellectual descendent of what Kant called the "common understanding" that was (falsely) called "common sense" (*CPJ* 122).

These two definitions contain a curious juxtaposition, as "the best that has been known and thought" (Said's second definition) also come to be the portals to acculturation through which the "brutalized" masses come to feel a sense of belonging to the economic, social, and political formations from which "culture" (his first definition) is relatively autonomous.¹⁴ For Said, there is little merit to the long-standing debate about the "relative autonomy" of culture conducted by Marxist and Marxisant critics since the nineteenth century.¹⁵ This is because, for Said, the universality towards which "culture" in his first definition reaches operates in the same domain of subjectivization as the racism and imperialism of his second definition of culture. The pairing of these definitions allows Said to connect "works of art" not only with their "pleasure and profit but also with the imperial process of which they were manifestly and unconcealedly a part" (xiv).

¹⁴ Said's rather awkward vocabulary—which is necessary for Said's overall purpose in *Culture and Imperialism*—is replaced in Eagleton's *The Idea of Culture* by the terms "Culture" (Said's first definition) and "culture" (Said's second definition). I discuss Eagleton's deployment of both cultures in more detail in Chapter Two, below.

¹⁵ The vocabulary of "relative autonomy" derives from Marx and Engels and is frequently taken up by Marxist literary critics, particularly following Althusser. Also influential in my thinking here are Eagleton (*The Ideology*) and Georg Lukács. For a contrasting account of the relationship of aesthetics to the political-economic sphere, see Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*.

Such a project manifestly assumes that “quantum of aesthetic value,” rendered here as “pleasure and profit,” and its concomitant “work of art” that Guillory locates as originating along with political economy in the late eighteenth century. Thus Said admits that the focus of his attention is the European novel, which he considers “*the* aesthetic object whose connection to the expanding societies of Britain and France is particularly interesting to study” (xii, emphasis in original). While his argument is perhaps less specific—“that stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world” (xii)—the hierarchies of aesthetic value that Eurocentricity inscribes, such that the novel is the artifact *par excellence* for study, come to light for their utility to empire. To understand better the relationship between culture and imperialism, then, means to understand better how the “brutalizing” apparatus of modern capitalism sets the ground for aesthetic value as the condition of “culture,” not only in the metropole (Said’s focus) but in the (former) colonies.

In order to link Said’s pathbreaking insight into the relationship between the “relative autonomy” of culture and its political history with the history of capitalist expansion under the auspices of empire, a glimpse into the makings of the social structures of capitalism is necessary. Georg Lukács describes the production of the social body under capitalism as a process of reification, by which he means a “fragmentation of the object of production [that] necessarily entails the fragmentation of its subject” (89). As production is rationalized, the finished product “ceases to be the object of the work-process,” with the result that labor becomes abstracted from the subject who labors (88), the alienation of which Marx wrote (*Economic* 64-66). As a result, “man in capitalist society confronts a reality ‘made’ by himself (as a class) which appears to him to be a natural phenomenon alien to himself” (Lukács 135). Objects—as the products of historical processes more extensive than the individual subject—seem to take on an unbridgeable

distance from the subjects who then consider them to be wholly alienated from themselves, as if made by external forces rather than through the labor of the (proletariat-as-)subject.

Confronted with a world of alien forces, the subject sets its inner life up as a natural occurrence equivalent to but also in opposition to the “naturally occurring” external forces. As the object and subject of the productive processes become each subordinated to the rules of rational production, both of these social positions appear to human subjects to be equally objects of the forces of capital that have been unleashed by historical development (a process that, as I discuss below, depends on imperialism). In rebellion against the production of the human as object under capitalism, an ideology of the subject as “natural” develops, in which the human being stands outside of the historical processes that now appear alien to them (136-37). This is the ideology of Idealist philosophy and the various Romantic movements that sprang up in the arts at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

These movements enable each other in their denial of the role of the historical process in the production of the subject as a unique being separate from the object. In other words, reification as a historical process obscures its own historicity. According to Lukács, it is then the duty of “art” or of the “principle of art” to ally the interior with the exterior, the material with the form, the subject with the object. Kant’s emphasis on the “formal” qualities of aesthetics, Lukács argues, is an attempt to “demolish the ‘contingent’ relation of the parts to the whole and to resolve the merely apparent opposition between chance and necessity” (137). Kant’s emphasis on form’s calling to mind the purposiveness of objects (their necessary integrity) without calling up the purpose itself (which is unknowable because of the process of reification) thus explains the human subject of capitalism *as it has been produced through capitalist reification*. In this view, Kant’s aesthetics are a critique of the reified object that itself falls under the logic of

reification, but now at the level of the constitution of the subject. Therefore art, as aesthetic objects, only exists *as such* as a counterweight to the commodity's alienation of labor from its object in capitalist society.

That the aesthetic object and the commodity are both products of the reification of social relations is not a new concept. After Lukács, the illusion of the artist as removed from the sphere of commodity exchange has been itself the object of numerous types of study, from the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and the neo-utilitarian philosophical critique of Barbara Herrnstein Smith to the contemporary literary history of Franco Moretti. Such an identification—an identification that attempts to note the differences between the aesthetic object and the commodity while simultaneously underlining their similarities—in fact, undergirds the debate over the literary canon that made the normally hermetic world of literary studies the object of media and political attention in the 1980s. According to Guillory,

it is only in the context in which artistic producers can see themselves as relatively autonomous that the objects they produce can be seen to embody a specific form of cultural capital, the 'aesthetic,' which can then be conceived on the analogy of exchange value as a relative quantum of aesthetic value. One might conjecture that in societies structured differently, the aesthetic might not be experienced *as such*. (337, emphasis in original)

But while Guillory is concerned with imagining an (admittedly) utopian world *after* aesthetics has become “unbound” from the economic capital that helps structure it in the modern world (340), my goal here is to contribute to the history of how they came to be mutually dependent and reinforcing.

In fact, such a co-constitution occurred through the development not simply of a global

marketplace, but of a global market tied to the development of the nation as a means of representing the needs and potentials of given populations.¹⁶ In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Friedrich Engels discuss how the forces that reify subjects and objects under capitalism are not merely “global” in a mundane sense of the word, but specifically “cosmopolitan”:

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. . . . All old-established national industries . . . are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. (*The Communist* 162)

Thus it is through industrial production and capitalist exchange that labor (as production) and its products (as commodities) are divorced and producers and consumers become alienated. In the same moment, this alienated labor takes on a cosmopolitan (or worldly) character. This worldliness is, therefore, a product of the capitalist system itself, a system that, according to Marx and Engels, “produced world history for the first time, insofar as it made all civilised nations and every individual member of them dependent for the satisfaction of their wants on the whole world, thus destroying the former natural exclusiveness of separate nations” (Marx and Engels, *The German* 81). Following Columbus’ arrival in the Americas,¹⁷ capitalism could link together all peoples across the globe, making the development of every individual—as well as

¹⁶ As will become evident in the following section, however, the “givenness” of these populations is itself the object of a necessary and still evolving critique. Balibar, for example, in “The Nation,” demonstrates how the ideology of the “nation” as a given entity is reproduced through appeals to “language” and “race.”

¹⁷ In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels mention the importance of Columbus’ journey to the capitalist system: “Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way” (160). Dussel elaborates philosophically on this event throughout his work.

the communities to which they imagine themselves attached—inseparably linked to an imagined sphere of belonging “that transcends limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of humanity” (Cheah, “What Is a World? On World” 26).

But this cosmopolitanism (as Marx, Engels, and Cheah might have it) contains within it the normative function of universalization posited by the cosmopolitan projects of seventeenth-century Idealist philosophers such as Kant.¹⁸ The philosopher Enrique Dussel has developed a substantial critique that bears on this subject. In an article from 2002, Dussel describes what he calls “trans-modernity,” a global culture that takes as its jumping-off point “what modernity excluded, denied, ignored as ‘insignificant,’ ‘senseless,’ ‘barbarous,’ as a ‘nonculture,’ an unknown opaque alterity, but at the same time evaluated as ‘savage,’ uncivilized, underdeveloped, inferior, merely ‘Oriental despotism,’ the ‘Asiatic mode of production,’ and so on” (“World-System and ‘Trans’-Modernity” 234). Such a transmodernity would therefore locate itself not in the developing (Eurocentric) consciousness of the global mode of production (Kant, Marx) and the postmodern critiques to which it has led (including Cheah),¹⁹ but in the “present-day cultures that predate European modernity, that have developed together with it, and that have survived until the present with enough human potential to give birth to a cultural plurality that will emerge after modernity and capitalism” (“World-System and ‘Trans’-Modernity” 234). Such a critique would not lead to a modern aesthetics “unbound” from capitalist commodity exchange, but to a new understanding of representation’s role in constituting worlds and, as a result, a new type of artistic and literary criticism, a new world

¹⁸ Kant’s quintessential entry into this field is “Toward Perpetual Peace.” For more on Kant’s cosmopolitanism as it relates to the idea of “freedom,” see Cheah, *Spectral* 61-113.

¹⁹ The list of philosophers, writers, and critics that could be included here are innumerable, but it is not the project of the present study to offer a transmodern critique of postmodernism. Dussel provides a limited critique of postmodernism (including some of its luminaries such as Jean-François Lyotard and Derrida) in “World-System and ‘Trans’-Modernity.”

literature.

Dussel is concerned more with elaborating a critique of the epistemological foundations of modernity and its afterlives than in an ontology of modernity itself, but it is fair to say that without a comprehensive understanding of how modernity is known—and particularly how it is known by cultures on the periphery of modernity²⁰—the current positions and effects of a transmodernity would be difficult to discern. In fact, ignorance of the origins of modernity, Dussel argues, is a part of the ontology of modernity itself. Locating modernity's beginning in the Catholic expansion of empire beginning in 1492, Dussel claims that there are, "in its origin, two Modernities" ("The 'World-System'" 62). In the First Modernity, "Spain 'manages' 'centrality' as domination through the hegemony of an integral culture, a language, a religion" ("The 'World-System'" 62). In the Second Modernity, which "frequently passes as the *only* Modernity," Anglo-Germanic Europe (mainly the Netherlands and England, but also France) "now places itself as the 'center' of the 'world-system'" and "must accomplish or increase its efficacy [across this new 'world-system'] through *simplification*" ("The 'World-System'" 63, emphasis in original). This simplification takes the form of "an abstraction that favors the *quantum* to the detriment of *qualitas*; that *leaves out* many valid variables, such as cultural, anthropological, ethical, political, and religious" ("The 'World-System'" 63, emphasis in original). Dussel's argument for two successive modernities thus reveals that the universalism that is often taken to be paradigmatic of "Modernity" (writ large) is only the rendering "universal" of the ethnocentric colonial enterprise inaugurated in the late fifteenth century by Spain. Modernity, including its subjects, geographies, and economies, becomes imaginable as "universals" precisely through the *suppression* (racism, religious persecution, etc.) of the

²⁰ A periphery, I acknowledge, that is constructed by the very Eurocentricity of modernity's epistemological origins (Dussel, "The 'World-System'").

differentiation upon which they were founded.

Such epistemological sleight-of-hand has been noted in modernity by Charles Taylor as well. What Taylor calls the “modern epistemology” participates in the production of modernity as the production of “a public sphere of open debate and exchange through media,” a project that is itself “sustained by a particular kind of social imaginary. . . that has a lot to do with specifically modern understandings of secular time and simultaneity” (190). This modern public sphere presumes the existence of humans as subjects with agency, a “background understanding”²¹ that “not only project[s] our own background backward but also render[s] this error invisible by repressing all awareness of backgrounds as such” (195). Taylor’s modern epistemology is thus premised on the same requisite commonality as the Kantian subject, which knows itself to be situated through its projection of a common sense within the aesthetic domain. The utility of the *Third Critique* to a critique of modernity is its articulation of the subject to the social by way of the aesthetic. Its utility to literary criticism is thus that it places the rendering of experience as aesthetic at the origin of subject formation.

Though Taylor claims this repression as one of the universal features of modernity (along with the public sphere), it is not clear in his argument why this process must be distinct to modernity or even how this would be known. However, its similarity to Dussel’s discussion of two modernities, the latter effacing the former through an appeal to a universalist horizon, clarifies how Dussel’s historiographical problem may be seen as a problem at the level of worlding. The extent to which the ideology of modernity permeates the institution of “literature” in the contemporary world is the subject of the following section.

²¹ This “background understanding” takes various names in Taylor, including “background understanding” (186), “the symbolic” (188), and “the social imaginary” (189).

Race, Taste, and the Time of Empire

If modernity is constituted in part by an ideology that obscures its global colonial origins, this does not mean that its origins cannot be attended to as they are glanced in modernity's long shadow. As I seek to demonstrate in this section, by unraveling the colonial relations that constitute modernity, contemporary theories of world literature are exposed for their presumption of a Kantian idealist conception of the social, which is, in turn, premised on Eurocentrism and imperialism. The contemporary discipline (if it can be called such) of "world literature" must therefore be reconceived if it is to serve principles of equality and justice.

Looking at one point where Kant's own idealism exposes its ethnocentric logic may help illustrate the case I make below, for even generous readings of Kant's *œuvre* must take account of the rather tendentious and conflicting place of race in Kant's project. While the *Critique of Pure Reason* is concerned with "the formal rules of all thinking" that can brook no "deformation" by anthropological concerns (*CPuR* 106-07), in his more minor works Kant offers his "considered opinion that Negroes (like gypsies) have an inherited aversion to hard labor and will never make good farmers" (Kuehn 344).²² The inconsistency in Kant's opinion of human capacities—Kant was a monogenist, so he did at least believe that "Negroes" and "gypsies" were of the same origin as white Europeans (Kuehn 298)—as they manifested differently in different races becomes obvious when such a fatalist position as that about farming described above is contrasted with his position that "there are no characteristics other than color that are inevitably inherited" (Kuehn 298). Such inconsistencies, made legible by the singular voice of Manfred Kuehn's biography of the Sage of Königsberg, should not be made too much of, but neither

²² Though the quotations from Kuehn here are his interpretations of Kant's work, such a distance only vaguely challenges my claim here, as my concern is as much with how the structures and vocabulary that Kant developed came to be appreciated and applied to a world of material production as they are to Kant's own specific (and, in the case of race, incompletely developed) theories.

should they be ignored.²³ In fact, the purpose of this chapter is not to denounce Kant's project of a universal community united by a common understanding, but to probe and reveal its limits as constitutive of the project itself. The limit of the universality proffered by Kant is displayed in his all-too-historically-bound concepts of race and such a limit can and should be a starting point for revealing how the modern world is premised on hierarchies within and between competing common understandings. Given the foundational role of Kant's theory of subject formation within aesthetic judgment to conceptions of the modern that I discuss above, exposing the racial implications of the normative account of Kantian aesthetics may help determine what aspects of the theory of aesthetic subject formation are worth trying to recuperate from their racist implications. This recuperation, I will argue in turn, may help disrupt the vectors of power that produce aesthetic value in the normative account of world literature.

Simon Gikandi, in his recent attempt to elucidate Enlightenment culture as a culture premised on racial ontology, cites Kant's earlier discussion of aesthetic theory, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, of 1764. Almost thirty years before the *Third Critique*, Kant states flatly that "[t]he Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that arises above the trifling" (qtd. in Gikandi 5). By 1790, Kant has excised such observations from his foray into aesthetics, leaving such thinking to his anthropological writings. While Gikandi, in *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, does not seek to explain this shift from 1764 to 1790, it might be a good place to start an inquiry into the role of race in aesthetic thought.

In fact, though racial thought and its putative object—human populations—are profoundly absent from the *Third Critique*, there remains a certain geographical division that, when teased out, suggests a racialized philosophizing. One such instance appears in the penultimate paragraph

²³ Kuehn, to his credit, calls Kant's writings on race "tedious at best, and offensive at worst," and provides the example about "Negroes" above as an example of the latter (344). Cf. Cornel West (62-63), who is much more willing to link Kant's racial theories to his theoretical work, but does not do so with Kant's aesthetic theory.

of the “First Book,” of the “First Section,” of the “First Part,” in the book entitled “Analytic of the Beautiful.” Here, Kant has been trying to determine what the “beautiful” is, as opposed to the “good” or the “agreeable.” Arguing for the beauty of nature over and above cultural (i.e. human) products, Kant uses William Marsden’s history of Sumatra as a counterexample. Marsden, he notes,

remarks that the free beauties of nature everywhere surround the observer there [in Sumatra] and hence have little attraction for him any more; by contrast, a pepper garden where the stakes on which the plants were trained formed parallel rows had much charm for him when he encountered it in the middle of the forest; and from this he infers that wild, to all appearances irregular beauty is pleasing only as a change for one who has had enough of the regular kind. (*CPJ* 126)

Kant hypothesizes, however, that such regularity can only serve to “entertain” for a brief period, and that soon it would “impose upon the imagination a burdensome constraint” (126). For Kant, this is because, like the bird’s song and unlike the human’s song, naturally-occurring beauty “seems to contain more freedom and thus more that is entertaining for taste” (126). In other words, because nature cannot be grasped by the understanding, it speaks more directly to the power of judgment to the extent that judgment is the expression of autonomy in a universally communicable framework.

In this way, the anecdote about Marsden in Sumatra serves as a perfect segue into the section of the *Third Critique* that follows it, a discourse on the sublime. For Kant, the sublime is a presentation in the subject of “limitlessness”—a total freedom that frightens the subject and causes reason to seek in it a “totality”— and, therefore, a type of subjective judgment exclusively

linked to nature (128).²⁴ Kant makes Marsden's account speak of beauty at precisely the moment that Kant speaks of the love of order as a limit on freedom. The fear of the "irregular beauty" that haunts both Marsden's sojourn in Sumatra and Kant's discussion of the sublime also reveals this discursive framework as mired in the imperial worlding of the globe. Two aspects of this anecdote and its use by Kant are of particular importance: 1) The geography of beauty and its correlate (for Kant), freedom; and 2) the relationship of Marsden and Kant to imperialism in Southeast Asia.

Marsden wrote ethnographic and philological accounts of Sumatra and nearby islands, including 1783's *History of Sumatra* and a dictionary of Malay in 1812. Kant would cite Marsden's *History* again in 1797's *The Metaphysics of Morals*, where Kant uses the British traveler's testimony about the Rajang tribe of Sumatra to demonstrate that "in requiring oaths one does not count on morality. . . but only on blind superstition" (*Metaphysics* 448). This is because, according to Kant's account of Marsden, the Rajangs "swear by the bones of their dead ancestors even though they do not believe that there is a life after death" (449). Kant furnishes an additional example, offered without citation: "or as the Negroes of Guinea take an oath on their *fetish*, such as a bird's feather, calling upon it to break their neck, and so forth" (449, italics in original). Though a superstition, such beliefs are, Kant concludes, "indispensable for the administration of justice since, without counting on it, a *court* would not be sufficiently in a position to ascertain facts kept secret and give the right verdict" (449, italics in original). In other words, oaths are a fiction of the juridical apparatus. Kant removes the oath from the domain of morality and reveals it as a stratagem of mundane power *by means of* its use by the "pagan people of Sumatra" and the "Negroes of Guinea" (449).

²⁴ The architectonic structure of how the sublime thus relates to reason while the beautiful relates to the understanding is of little import to my examination below. For a brief but nonetheless interesting overview of Kant's theory of the sublime and its relation to his theory of beauty, see Christian Helmut Wenzel (106-13).

To be beholden to the direction of a source other than one's own capacity to think (such as superstition) is, for Kant, be in a "self-incurred minority" ("An Answer" 17). Such a self-incurred obstacle to freedom is shared "by far the greatest part of humankind (including the entire fair sex)," but this should not be reason in and of itself to continue in such a fashion, as Kant states, "it is difficult for any single individual to extricate himself from the minority that has become almost nature to him" (17). Though Kant believes that it is more possible "that a public should enlighten itself" and that it is, in fact, "almost inevitable, if only it is left its freedom" (17), nonetheless leaves the peoples of Sumatra and Guinea unfree, as demonstrated through their adherence to the juridical superstition of the oath.²⁵ Incapable of thinking for themselves because bound to the superstitions that undergird their social structure, the Rajangs and Negroes are voided from the terrain of the beautiful, and neither group is mentioned in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Marsden's original account is significantly more complicated, as it introduces a comparative analysis of beauty, but one emphasizing human productive capacities as understood in the ability to dominate nature (Marsden 112-13). But in Kant's account, it is as if Marsden encounters a pepper plot without people in the middle of the deserted jungle. Kant raises no questions about the possible aesthetic components as seen by the farmers in the Sumatran jungle, despite Marsden's specific invocation of Sumatran aesthetics as they are tied to developmental schemas (Marsden 113). Kant's account effaces the comparative possibilities that Marsden (rather one-sidedly, to be sure) proposes for aesthetics in order to present a universal theory from a European position.

This is by no means meant to chide Kant (or Marsden) for a lack of contemporary political

²⁵ Kant's definition of a "public" in "An Answer" most likely would not include the Rajangs and Negroes of his *Metaphysics*, as it depends on the "public use of one's reason in all matters" ("An Answer" 18, emphasis in original), which neatly excludes any and all sites where there is censorship or restriction on public speech, which colonial sites have typically had in excess. For the role censorship played in the Spanish Philippines, see Smita Lahiri, John Blanco (*Frontier Constitutions*) and W.E. Retana (*La censura*).

savvy, but rather to map out domains in which race can and cannot be thought. For in the *Third Critique*, written three decades after Kant's dismissal of the sentiments of African Negroes discussed by Gikandi, a similar theme appears once again, but transposed from the domain of beauty (in which Kant and Kant's representation of Marsden brook no particularity) to that of morality. (The *Metaphysics* was written four years after the second edition of the *Third Critique*, and six years after the first.) If the Rajangs and Negroes have been bracketed off from the experience of morality, it is because of their lack of reason; if they have been bracketed off from the experience of the beautiful, it is because *race itself* has been bracketed off from pertaining to the domain of beauty.

Kant's use of Marsden, however, must be understood in relationship to the broader questions of imperialism that Marsden's presence in Sumatra entails. As Anthony Webster's account makes clear, Marsden's time in Sumatra in the 1770s coincided with peak British interest in the island, though such interests did not culminate in establishing British-allied polities such as would happen in the Malay Peninsula and Singapore (Webster 27-52). Cheaper access to pepper and other spices was the chief British economic reason for interest in the archipelago of which Sumatra is a part, as well as interest in the greater Southeast Asian area (27). In fact, it is in a lengthy description of the cultivation of pepper that Marsden makes his observations on beauty. Marsden's interest in pepper, then, is a part of a broader commercial structure related to Britain's great development in the eighteenth century and the concomitant desire to expand the consumption of what were still seen as luxury goods, such as spice. Marsden, only seventeen years old when he was dispatched as an employee of the British East India Company to Southeast Asia, thus encounters the Sumatran landscape as an inheritor of British political and economic culture.

Yet his estimation of the beauty of the pepper gardens is surprisingly light on condescension. The difference of taste between the order of the pepper garden that he admires in the wildness of the jungle, and the “wildnesses of nature” in British gardens admired by the refined English gentry that cultivated them, he explains, is “not merely the effect of caprice, nor entirely of refinement, but results from the change of circumstances” (Marsden 112). Here, in Marsden, as in Kant, there is no mention of a single actual human, only their trace in the work necessary to cultivate pepper. The comparative perspective, however, is still worthy of note, as the geography of Marsden’s travels provide him with a comparative frame that Kant rejects.

Marsden’s explanation for the pleasure he derives from seeing the garden in a jungle clearing is also remarkable. “Perhaps the simple view of human industry,” he explains, “so scantily presented in that island, might contribute to this pleasure, by awakening *those social feelings that nature has inspired us with*, and which make our breasts glow on the perception of whatever indicates the happiness of our fellow creatures” (113, emphasis added). Marsden provides a chain of reasoning for the beautiful: The trace of production suggests a human interest; human interest awakens social feelings in us; such social feelings are all the more powerful for the perceived absence of such in the surrounding environment. Beauty is thus linked to a socialized pleasure tied to productivity. There is certainly a developmentalist mentality at work here, but even more fascinating is that there is an interest in material (pepper, human labor) that becomes linked metonymically with aesthetics (as the experiences of pleasure and displeasure, perception and form). Since Marsden made these observations while an employee of the British East India Company, the filiations between imperial modes of production and modern theories of aesthetics seem condensed in this figure, a chosen touchstone of Kant’s universalizing philosophy. While the final link in Marsden’s chain may depart

significantly from Kant's account of aesthetics in its particularity, the first two coincide quite well, despite Kant's insistence that nature is the only thing that can truly be beautiful, since human freedom, and art by extension, is natural (Derrida, "Economimesis" 4). It is in the "social feelings," then, that art comes to be beautiful, that is, comes to be art. But it is also these social feelings that are linked to circumstance and, perhaps, to caprice and to refinement. Marsden's "social feelings" are, in other words, the foundation for the common understanding as a community of taste in Kant's writings.

The community of taste can be seen as the basis of intellectual production in Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*. In discussing how production and consumption have become internationalized through the expansion of the capitalist market across the globe, Marx and Engels insist that this structure has had its effect equally on the world of intellectual labor: "as in material, so also in intellectual production. *The intellectual creations of individual nations* become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature" (*The Communist* 162, emphasis added). This brief note has become the occasion for numerous critical studies, despite its brevity and lack of development. Recent studies in particular have focused on how it relates cosmopolitan intellectual production to the development of a global market,²⁶ but the reverse is equally true, as it shows how Marx and Engels conceived of intellectual labor in the early development of capitalism to be bound to national "narrow-mindedness." Unfortunately for the discipline of world literature, the "world" it inherited was one of uneven development both at the level of the political economy and (necessarily) the level of culture. National consciousness thus exists as what Tom Nairn has called "the 'natural' fact which still haunts the mythology of the subject—that should-have-been

²⁶ This is how Cheah ("What Is a World? On World") and Shu-Mei Shih ("Global") use this passage.

history which to a surprising extent still governs reflection on what there has been and is” (342). Instead, “world literature” is the product of nations now linked to other nations through the “world history” occasioned by colonialism, capitalist expansion, and uneven development.

The “nation” has heretofore canalized accounts of literary history, serving as the primary gateway through which intellectual activity must pass in order to take its place as the “common property” of “world literature.” This is because the nation is the necessary supplement to the individual in its achievement of freedom through cultural activity, the form in which freedom is recognizable in the Kantian scheme. Political freedom derives from the transcendental freedom of being human, but transcendental freedom is only realized and recognized through culture, which “supplies the ontological paradigm for the political” (Cheah, *Spectral* 45). If this is the case, Cheah argues, then “political freedom is the spontaneous auto-causality of a collective body in which an individual’s humanity can be realized because its norms embody universal ideals” (45). Intellectual labor is an expression of the individual’s adherence to the norms of a collectivity, whose manifestation as such is dependent on the freedom that the products of such labor represent. Or, as Gayatri Spivak has said, “[i]n order to assume culture we must assume collectivity” (*Death* 27).

The canalization of artistic (intellectual) labor that occurs here—from the individual through the collective to the world—is what is described by Marx and Engels above. This articulation of a concept of “world literature” is followed closely by an analysis of how this development is achieved *through* the ideology of the nation itself. According to them, the national bourgeoisie “has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation” (*The Communist* 162-63). This concentration on the level of the “nation” is

actually the consolidation of imperialism as a system that links the whole globe together unevenly. The “nation” marks that unevenness and codes it as eternal essence.²⁷

The unevenness of the imperial globe is, however, lived as temporally homogenous. Benedict Anderson helped frame an understanding of national belonging as an outgrowth of the particularly modern apprehension of time. Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Anderson used the concept of “homogeneous, empty time” to describe the way in which the time of the nation is experienced as “transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar” (*Imagined* 24). His examples, drawn largely from nineteenth-century novels (José Rizal’s *Noli me tangere* from the Philippines, José Joaquín Lizardi’s *El periquillo sarniento* from Mexico, and the early twentieth-century *Semarang Hitam*, by Mas Marco Kartodikromo, from Indonesia), demonstrate the prominent role of such simultaneity in the discourse of early nationalist thought. On the world stage, as well, and particularly after World War I, the simultaneous time that governs individual nations came to govern the world as “the legitimate international norm [came to be] the nation-state” (113).²⁸ The concept of the nation, in its “modularly imagined” way (113), is, for Anderson, tied to the perception of time as everywhere uniform and devoid of *telos*.

This very concept of the “homogeneous, empty time” of the nation articulates the relationship between nation and empire, as well as that between aesthetics and capital.

Discussing this concept, which opened “the horizontal configuration of temporal coincidence,”

Allan Punzalan Isaac has noted how the “capitalist conversion of production relations and the

²⁷ Nairn describes this process and its relation to *The Communist Manifesto* on 342. In another venue, it would be worth comparing this to Balibar’s formulation of the nation’s eternity in “The Nation.”

²⁸ Perhaps not coincidentally, the establishment of a uniform global time, located by one’s relation to the Greenwich Meridian and its polar opposite, the International Date Line, had only been commonly accepted for about two decades by the end of the First World War. The current date line was drawn in 1899, but remains today a mere convention, and “has never been formally accepted by any single world power or international agreement” (Barrows 161).

modular character of print capitalism in the hands of the national bourgeoisie” tied “the imagination of bourgeois nationalism to the plural spaces of the emergent nation, as least among the literate classes in colonial centers” (13-14). This process, however, is less clear in colonial and postcolonial sites where “identity formation hinges upon the colonized space as the product of imperial sedimentation and the continual interplay of histories” (14). It is, therefore, not just “the plurality of spaces within ‘homogenous, empty time’” that is in question for postcolonial cultural history, “but also the tensile plurality of temporalities vying for hegemony” in those spaces (14). The dilemma—which Isaac seeks to address in his study of Filipino-American culture—is how to map such temporalities, temporalities whose very differentiation has taken place within unequal power relations. As Isaac also notes, in his reading of Frantz Fanon, colonialism not only differentiated colonizer from colonized, but the latter’s culture “is relegated as the past to the colonizer’s present and presence. Colonial and postcolonial conditions establish the coexistence of these nonsynchronal temporalities” (13). As a result of such colonial differentiation, the history of *cultures* is narrativized as a history of *culture*, with differences, divergences, and approximations placed on a timeline of civilization.

This timeline is, in turn, the product of the horizontalization of time that Anderson marks as arising with what he calls “print capitalism.” For Anderson, this type of capitalism is built on the novel and the newspaper, which both assume “calendrical coincidence” and the market, as print, in the form of books, was “the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity” (*Imagined* 33-34). The centrality of the novel to Anderson’s narrative of the origins of the nation and, more importantly, the nation’s temporality raises questions about their possible correlation. These questions have typically been addressed in two ways: through the nation’s narration, and

through the coincidence of nationalist thought with aesthetic discourse.²⁹ More important for the study of literature as a discipline, however, is the proximity of national and imperial conceptions of time with those of literary and aesthetic discourse.

Within the bounds of Eurocentric modernity, the terms of modernity dictated above are not problematic even if they appear arbitrary. The nation can link the individual to the global in the homogenizing process of Anderson's "imagined community," in which nation-states composed of individuals who recognize themselves as coincident in time come into being as the whole world is (imagined to be) likewise "modularly imagined" in the style of the nation (*Imagined* 113).³⁰ The community of taste in Kant is precisely the universalization of custom and taste as that which constitutes the (national) community in a manner that could be abstracted to the whole world. Kojin Karatani has claimed that Kant was the first to articulate this problem from the philosophic standpoint (i.e. the problem of universality as a problem of judgments of taste), but credits Giambattista Vico with an earlier normative description of the taste-sharing community as a "common sense:" "common sense [*senso commune*] is judgment without reflection, shared by an entire class, an entire people, an entire nation, or the entire human race" (qtd. in Karatani 38). Vico's articulation of the problem of taste, however, collapses two meanings of "common sense," which Kant tried to disentangle as, discussed above, the sensorial realm common to subjects and the common understanding that is formed through the common representational vocabulary (aesthetic attributes) of a community of taste (*CPJ* 122).

In his exploration of the role of literature in constituting nineteenth-century Philippine society, John Blanco discusses how the Kantian "common understanding" comes to have a

²⁹ For the former track, see the works collected by Homi Bhabha in *Nation and Narration*. For the latter track, see Marc Redfield.

³⁰ This is a vast compression of the relationship individual-nation-world as described by Anderson (*Imagined*), who can be consulted for further development of this relationship as a problem in itself. See also Marc Redfield's critique of the role of imagination in Anderson's formulation (45-59).

political valence in the version of “common sense” discussed by Antonio Gramsci. Blanco demonstrates how, in pursuing “the Kantian community of sentiment” (what I am calling a “community of taste”), Spanish colonial officials in the nineteenth-century Philippines attempted “to anticipate and fashion an overarching rationality, a ‘reason of State,’ that would define and inform the administration and institutions of modern colonial rule” (*Frontier* 9). What resulted, however, was that “writers also wittingly or unwittingly ‘folklorized’ [this rationality], exposing its contradictory logic, stimulating contesting interpretations of that rationality, and exploring the consequences of those divergent interpretations” (9). An attempt to implement the “common sense” of Kant as a norm of governmental rationality in the colonies unleashed rationalism as the Gramscian “common sense” that would become so foundational to the human subjects of the State’s machinery that the State itself would no longer be able to contain this rationalism. The liberatory qualities of such a rationalism and the regime of aesthetics that accompanied it are attendant on the expansion of global market capitalism, as Marx and Engels theorized and the figure of Marsden illustrates.³¹

Dussel has pointed out that modernity and the history of its attendant formations—including the nation, modern aesthetics, literature, capitalist development, and so on—is not “an *independent*, autopoietic, self-referential system, but, instead, it is ‘part’ of a ‘world-system’: its *center*. . . . Modernity is not a phenomenon of Europe as *independent* system, but of Europe as ‘center’” (“The ‘World-System’” 54, emphasis in original). The normative claims of (European) modernity as the *telos* of human history is, upon inspection, merely “a phenomenon proper to the ‘system’ ‘center-periphery,’” an alibi for the modern world-system (54). Included in this

³¹ On the centrality of aesthetics to the project of rationalism within the colonial state in the Philippines, see Blanco (*Frontier*, particularly 157-83). For a phenomenal account of how the symbolism of Philippine *ilustrados* (or “Enlightened ones”) disseminated itself in seemingly rational but unpredictable ways among Philippine revolutionaries in the 1896 Revolution against Spain, see Megan Thomas, “K Is for De-Kolonization,” along with her introduction to *Orientalists* (1-22).

exposition is the self-evidence of the “nation,” the “world,” and the “work,” whose contours now appear as the center of a center-periphery system. “Modernity” then becomes a means of “managing” the system (68), and the nation a technology for managing this system, which, therefore, must be interrogated as it produces literary systems. Dussel thus champions “critics of ontology and Modernity from (*desde*) the periphery” as being able to discern the limits of modernity (such as the nation itself) that thinkers within the European horizon are unwilling or incapable of delineating (81 n. 81, parentheses in original). With this in mind, I turn now to contemporary theories of world literature as they stem from the division of “common sense” and its utility in the production of nation, empire, and their unevenness in time.

Ontologies of World Literature

Up to the contemporary period, the figure of the nation as a community of taste has figured in accounts of world literature such as that of David Damrosch. Damrosch, as Paulo de Medeiros has argued (279), depends on this articulation of individual (both author and work) to the world via the nation, despite his attempts to render works of world literature as “more-than” any single nationality (Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 281). Thus Damrosch’s argument that a “work enters into world literature by a double process: first, by being read *as* literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin” (6, emphasis in original), comes to seem tautological.³² The passive construction of this definition and its reliance on the “work”—a term that suggests its own problematic relationship to global divisions of labor—delineates the ambiguity of Damrosch’s inquiry: Read *by whom* as literature? Circulated *by whom*? And, in the final step of the process, must it circulate *as* “literature”? As

³² Damrosch affirmed a similar perspective in his presentation, “Literature before ‘Literature,’” given at the American Comparative Literature Association conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, April 4, 2013.

opposed to the concept of the community of understanding outlined in this chapter as a bounded, historically constructed intersubjectivity, theories such as Damrosch's have emphasized a concept of literature as transparency, accessibility, and permanence. This avoids interrogating the heart of the coloniality of power that produces such qualities as mechanisms of power that structure what is opaque, untranslatable, and ephemeral.³³ For Damrosch, translation—either between languages or communities—is thus the *sine qua non* of inscription in the annals of—or plotting on the map of—world literature. (These two metaphors are not equivalent, as I discuss in Chapter Three, below.)

Shu-Mei Shih has critiqued approaches like this, claiming that systems in place at the international level can confirm or deny the place of a particular literary grouping within the “world membership of literatures,” and that such “technologies of recognition” can confer “selectively and often arbitrarily” the status of “literature” on particular authors, thereby producing (or disavowing) a national body within the global literary canon (“Global” 17-22). In some of her more recent work, Shih's attempt to evade the tendency of the (Chinese) nation-state to incorporate objects in its own organism relies on the seemingly spontaneous (auto-causal) affinities of the “Sinophone.” Thought of as an extension of her earlier concerns in “Global Literature and the Technologies of Recognition,” *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* can be thought of as an alternative identificatory regime to the nation-state, in which art objects created in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (and, more problematically, Singapore, Malaysia, the United States, etc.) can be interrogated for how they “open themselves to the global while simultaneously taking a varied stance toward what is known as ‘Chinese culture’” (*Visuality* 6). The Sinophone's space between, on the one hand, the globe and, on the

³³ Here, my argument is sympathetic to Emily Apter on the “untranslatable.” The “coloniality of power” is what Aníbal Quijano has named as the racialization and Eurocentrism that serve as founding principles of modern power.

other, “Chinese culture” (as a culture pertaining to the nation-state of the People’s Republic of China, hence the scare quotes) becomes a heuristic that replaces “the nation” with the “-phone” sphere. Literature as a system (A) cannot be addressed within this framework, except as glimpsed at the level of the subsystem (B). The system (A) thus appears as a product of the language-literature (B) and not as dialectically related to it. “Value” as an objective quality (exchange-value) achieved through socialization becomes “value-to” (use-value) and can no longer be useful to the critique of the imbalance of recognition achieved through the institutionalization of the nation-state.

Thus, the former approach has tended to assume the status of “the literary” and to challenge the concept of cultural belonging, while the latter has tended to assume cultural belonging and to contest the production of literary value. As Wai Chee Dimock has noted in response to these trends, literature cannot be reduced to “a one-to-one correspondence between the geographic origins of a text and its evolving radius of literary action” (“Literature” 175). The “origins” of a text—which I suggest in the introduction should be conceived of as a “language-literature,” but which might also be called, loosely “context”³⁴—cannot correspond one-to-one with *any* unity, precisely because to do so is to assume the process of aestheticization (the giving-form-to) that literature itself embodies and that I have discussed as the educational aspect of becoming a subject in modernity. Theories of world literature that have ignored this problematic must instead rely on descriptions of events in the world to provide a normative pattern for understanding what makes literature appear as “literature” in a world-system, and have not investigated how literature constructs that very “world.”

Franco Moretti’s approach to world literature—what he has called “distant reading”—more closely approaches the constitution of the world through the distribution of aesthetic

³⁴ Such is the name Derrida gives it in “Signature Event Context.”

communities for which I have argued here. Since the late nineties, Moretti has been advocating a world literature that, in admission of the linguistic and temporal limits of the human life, would “become ‘second hand:’ a patchwork of other people’s research, *without a single direct textual reading*” (“Conjectures” 57, emphasis in original). Such a practice of reading would thus be able to capture a picture of the world literary system as “one and unequal” (54). Quantitative methods are brought to bear on texts “in the service of understanding literature as a socialization process responsible for cultural power structures, class hierarchies, the bourgeois domestication of consciousness, and the revolutionary potential of intellectual labor” (Apter, *Against* 48). Moretti’s actual reading practice often belies the more grandiloquent claims of distance and scientism, and, as will become evident, my research owes a great deal to the provocations and data that his work presents. However, as Moretti himself admits in a recent collection of some of his more provocative essays, his essays have often been split between those concentrating on “the often random variations arising from formal experiments” and those focused on “the broad social processes that underlie cultural selection” (“The End” 138). In both poles of this oscillation, texts exist as objects of broader systems and processes, systems to which they are subject but on which their individual influence approaches nil. This methodology renders texts as evidentiary data of social changes that exceed them. Texts do not *do*, they merely *are*.

Though Moretti’s work thus escapes limiting cultural categories of the study of world literature such as “nation” and “value” that structure critiques such as Shih’s and Damrosch’s, it is because literature itself, in his account, has been limited to a reflective apparatus that presumes its separation and subordination to political economy.³⁵ The “revolutionary potential of intellectual labor” that Emily Apter sees as one of the goals of Moretti’s program ends up being

³⁵ The immutability of the material world, according to Cheah, is one aspect of Moretti’s research (“What Is a World? Postcolonial”). Cf. Alexander Beecroft (91).

only available at the level of criticism, as the literary text and its author(s) are reduced to overdetermined and non-determinative data. If there is to be a “revolution,” it will be instigated by the critic’s ability to synthesize into a single unity the material of literary production and thereby unsettle the sense of epistemological superiority that Taylor theorized as the “modern.” As Spivak has said in regards to Moretti’s project, “[t]he real problem is the claim to scopic vision” (*Death* 108 n.1). This is because Moretti’s world-systems theory of literature denies the unequal utility (use-value) of literary production to the core and the periphery. It is not that so-called peripheral nations are not useful to the core, as Moretti cites Jérôme David as contending (“More” 107); rather, as will become evident over the course of this dissertation, it is that the process that produces the culture of the core as culture (in both senses of Said’s definition) persists within cultural production itself. Thus the cultural core—what Pascale Casanova continues to call “the literary Greenwich meridian”—requires the production of the “unmodern” to proclaim its own modernity. This is Casanova’s largely unrecognized contribution, a contribution of which she herself seems largely unaware.³⁶

Rejecting approaches to world literature that assume a geographic world of nations and ethnic identities, and highlighting the productivity of labor itself, Cheah has proposed an alternate conception of world literature that problematizes the modifier “world” in this heuristic. Cheah, following Hannah Arendt, defines a world as “a circle of belonging that transcends limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of humanity” (“What Is a World? On World” 26). With this definition, literary scholars can focus on how literature *imagines* a world, rather than merely reflecting it, providing for a study of literature that emphasizes its ability to

³⁶ Thus statements such as “international unification of time is possible only if each party agrees to recognize one or several places as reference points that make it possible to measure time and to evaluate practices using universally recognized standards” reveal more than they intend to do (Casanova, “The Literary” 8). Casanova is perfectly correct, but neither here nor in *The World Republic of Letters* does she consider texts and writers who refuse this unification, ignore it, or are ignorant of it.

participate actively in the formation of relationships between subjects and objects. Inquiries such as Cheah's allow critics of world literature to think of the purpose and uses of literature in new and productive ways. But such a stance as his tends to ignore the hierarchies that presently exist in the evaluation of genres and texts, hierarchies on which scholars such as Damrosch and Casanova—for all the problems present in their work—focus their attentions. Focusing on content to the near exclusion of form, Cheah's work does not interrogate the hierarchies of the literary as a specific "discourse of value" (to use John Guillory's term) that must be disentangled in order to provide a clear picture of "world literature" as it operates within global material, as well as symbolic, inequalities.³⁷

Conclusion

In his more recent research on the novel, Moretti has argued that the global history of the novel reveals the translation of content from the core of literary modernity (Europe) to the periphery (everywhere else), while form develops contingently and unpredictably in peripheral sites ("Evolution" 132). The separation of form from content that this assumes is heuristically valuable for Moretti in that it appears valuable both critically (in that it produces new methods of literary investigation) and politically (in that it acknowledges the periphery as equal innovators of form, that is, of what can be judged *aesthetically* by the critic). As will become evident in the following chapters, however, it is this division *itself* that is the site of the major battleground of world literature as the debates of aesthetics are rehearsed in peripheral sites, represented in this study by Puerto Rico and the Philippines under first Spanish, and then United States, Empire. Representation, as what links form to content, becomes the most fought-over terrain between

³⁷ A discourse of value, I should note, that has vacillated between privileging content and form in modern criticism. For differing accounts of this, see John Guillory and Barbara H. Smith.

imperial subjects and the Empire that seeks to represent them to themselves. In these sites, the literary is revealed as a liberal ideology of universality (Kant's "common sense" as it is inconsistently separated from "common understanding") that denies its constitution in/as limited communities (Gramsci's "common sense"). This ideology of universality, in turn, links habits to culture, time to value, freedom to subjectivity, and language to the world. These linkages will be the subject of the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two: Culture and Race in the Colonial Liberal Imaginary: Puerto Rico, 1849-1887

Introduction

Denise Ferreira da Silva has argued that the idea of “culture” was constructed alongside the formulation of the self-evidence of the (white, male, straight) subject. This subject, whose contours would be outlined by reason and freedom, developed in the Enlightenment, along with the expansion of capitalist modes of production across an ever-expanding global space. In the construction of this subject as transparent and capable of action, the scientific logic of anthropology was created to mirror this mapping out of agency, crafting the “cultural” as the domain in which the worlds of those outside of the project of Enlightenment operate as opaque and highly determined (xxi-xxii). Up to the present, Silva claims, the “cultural still authorizes (re)writings of the other of Europe” into the present day, now in the position of the “incarcerated subjects of cultural difference” (xxxv). In this strain of thought, culture is that which determines the subject’s actions in the last instance, relegating certain subjects to perpetual belatedness within the cycle of capitalist production.

This is an inverted formulation of the Marxist theory of culture as a superstructure overdetermined by the material infrastructure of society, a formula articulated in the nineteenth century by Friedrich Engels and expanded in the twentieth century by Louis Althusser. Engels writes, in a letter to J. Bloch from 1890, that

The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—the political forms of the class struggle and its results: to wit constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles, and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. (Qtd. in Althusser, *For Marx* 112)

From this passage and the works of Karl Marx that Engels references in this letter, Althusser formulates his theory of overdetermination, in which history develops through “the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific effectivity” on the production of historical events (111). Overdetermination is thus an inverted form of the culturalist position toward history and society that grew, according to Silva, out of the Enlightenment representation of the subject. While (Althusserian) Marxist theory would position the subject as the product of cultural *and* economic forces (with the latter determining the former and the former impinging on the potential determinations of the latter), culturalist theories would banish the individual from the domain of capitalist (re)production *to the extent that they are determined by culture*. Culture, in this view, is the primary determinant of material culture, as the subject’s formation is seen as dependent on cultural resources that persist alongside with, but crucially not conditioned *by*, the economic situation.

It is with this in mind that *El jíbaro*, by Manuel A. Alonso y Pacheco,¹ a text of considerable influence in nineteenth-century Puerto Rican letters and subsequent literary

¹ When it was released, the title was spelled *El gíbaro*. I utilize the modernized spelling throughout (except where fidelity to quotations demands otherwise), both in order to be consistent with the standard edition of 1949 prepared

histories, can be seen as an early reference point in the carving out of a distinct domain of culture within Spanish imperial logic. It can also be examined for how it structures the relation between colony and metropole, and how this relation presages the later development of Puerto Rican literature within the broader field of the literary. *El jíbaro* is of particular interest for the study of Spanish imperial literary history for two reasons. The first is Alonso's discursive and generic flexibility; *El jíbaro* collects a number of quite diverse texts, which vary in style from *cuadros de costumbres*, to polemics, to poems, all of which Alonso calls "escenas," or "scenes." Similar to the *estampas* (vignettes) that filled the *Album puertorriqueño* of 1844—to which Alonso was a contributor and which, like Alonso's later work, was published in Barcelona²—the *escenas* of Alonso's *El jíbaro* provide brief descriptions of insular customs with minimal narrative or character development. To amplify the "local" quality of these *escenas*, many of the poems are rendered in a *jibaro*-like orthography and grammar, which clashes strongly with Alonso's more standardized and restrained prose texts. The second factor is its fixation on Puerto Rican "culture" as the unifying distinction of Puerto Ricans, over and above language, race, or geography (although necessarily implicating all of these). Alonso's generic variety serves, in part, as a way of knitting together diverse strains of proto-nationalist imaginings. I will demonstrate how this unification, as it is expressed as "culture," comes into being, for Alonso, as a product of Spanish imperial history, and particularly its attempt to foster liberal principles of the individual in the cultivation of an imperial belonging throughout the nineteenth century.

by F. Manrique Cabrera and José Antonio Torres Morales and for ease of lexicographical reference. Likewise, I follow the orthography used in Cabrera and Torres Morales' edition of *El jíbaro*, which includes frequent antiquated accentuation.

² For the role that the *Album* and its sequel, the *Aguinaldo puertorriqueño* of 1846, played in preparing Puerto Ricans for their depiction in literature, see Salvador Brau's introduction to Alonso, written for the second edition (v-xxii).

The term “culture” has come down to us, Terry Eagleton claims, as a signifier of “what we can change, but the stuff to be altered has its own autonomous existence, which then lends it something of the recalcitrance of nature” (*The Idea* 4). It is also, he continues, “a matter of following rules, and this too involves an interplay of the regulated and unregulated” (4). In this etymological argument,³ culture works on a potential level, referring to the product of human labor-power. The turn to “the cultural” as the object of imperial attention, however, does not seek to reform a material reality, but to mask it. In particular, the development of education as a practice of cultivation in Puerto Rico—which operated on the student through instruction in communal belonging—provided imperial liberals with a discourse that eschewed a history of material racial exploitation. Simultaneously, the site of the “dance” exposes one’s cultivation through the dispositions of the body, which, therefore, reinscribes the racial in the moment of expression. Culture, cultivation, and education are three terms that operate on the interior of the subject, rather than on material bodies, and thus mask their origins in racial ontology. The dance reexposes the materiality of the body to the imperatives of what is commonly shared, thus reinforcing racial distinctions within the discourse of belonging. Through these linked media, the Spanish Empire sought to erase the material history of productive forces that constituted it in Puerto Rico, particularly racial slavery.

The Imperatives of Culture

The “logic of culture” that I am seeking to explain here derives from two modern definitions of culture. Briefly, this divide can be sketched out as Eagleton has done in *The Idea of Culture*. Eagleton has described the first definition of “Culture” (which he denotes with a

³ “The Latin root of the word ‘culture’ is *colere*, which can mean anything from cultivating and inhabiting to worshipping and protecting” (Eagleton, *The Idea* 2).

capital C) as a social production that reaches for the universal. This is always in tension with “culture” (with a lower-case c) as a historical instantiation embedded within a particular social conjuncture. In other words, Culture connotes refinement, exclusivity, and cosmopolitanism, while cultures connote spontaneity (or lack of reflection), popularity, and provincialism.⁴ Thus Culture, according to Eagleton, “has an ironic relation to its historical *milieu*: if it needs that setting to realize itself, it is also Culture only because it surpasses it towards the universal” (*The Idea* 53). What allows this, he claims, is “aesthetic form, which shapes this local material into something of wider purport, and which thus provides the reader with a model of what he himself is to do *if he is to receive the work as high culture*” (53-54, emphasis added). The model made from material experience under discussion here is, of course, the same figure of the reified object that occupied much of my discussion in Chapter One. “High culture” in this formulation is that which is presented (or that which presents itself) as delinked from the economy of nature, and, by this very process, emblematic of nature’s own imperative to freedom (Derrida, “Economimesis” 5-6). As Eagleton’s formulation above makes clear, such an appearance only appears as such *if* the “reader” (or subject) *wills* the object to be (taken as) high culture.

It is precisely the nature of this “if” on which this alibi stumbles, for to take a work of art *as* a work of art is to lend it the aura that Walter Benjamin diagnosed as flourishing in the wake of mechanical reproducibility. As Benjamin classifies it, the aura of a work of art is its relation to tradition, marked by “its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (“The Work” 220). Benjamin sees such assurance of uniqueness as linked to the origins of art in ritual, claiming that “the unique value of the ‘authentic’ work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value” (224). It is precisely its distance from the

⁴ This dual definition of “culture” approximates the definitions expounded by Edward Said (*Culture and Imperialism* xii-xiii), which I took up in Chapter One. Their respective valuations of each, however, seem almost reversed.

quotidian matters of life that guarantees it as art, and, in so doing, translates it to the sacred realm. However, as art becomes secularized (a transition that in Europe is accompanied by the development of capitalism), “authenticity” comes to replace the cult as the criterion of auratic value, that is, the value imbued in an art object by the distance that the viewer experiences in relation to it (222-23). The final transition, and the signal of the dissolution of aura for Benjamin, comes with mechanical reproducibility, which “enabled graphic art to illustrate everyday life, and it began to keep pace with printing” (219). Autocatalytic, this process continued to accelerate throughout the nineteenth century.

Most important for the discussion at hand is the aura’s twilight in the nineteenth century, which, according to Benjamin, develops through the representation of “everyday life,” beginning with lithographic printing. Just as this provoked the residual ideology of “l’art pour l’art”—which Benjamin calls “a theology of art” (224)—it reverses the function of objects so named: “Instead of being based on ritual, it [art] begins to be based on another practice—politics” (224). To take art *as* art, then, is to participate in a residual formation that cannot account for mechanization and technical reproducibility. Following its ability to represent the everyday to a mass audience, the artistic object is staked out by a particular social sector as its organizing principle in the face of other organizing principles (for example, National Socialism). By not acknowledging how the aesthetic domain enters the social space as a politics in the nineteenth century, society runs the risk of fascism’s aestheticization of politics (242). Benjamin seeks, instead, to politicize art, which means not only to make it an intervention in social questions beyond itself, but also to interpret *the category itself* as a political intervention. In the era of mechanical reproducibility, to acknowledge an object experienced aesthetically as a political intervention is to *undo* its reception as high culture, if “high culture” is meant auratically, that is,

as that which lifts the object out of the everyday social questions that the age of mechanical reproduction forces it to confront. In other words, as mechanical reproducibility allows everyday life to be depicted to us every day, high culture takes on an ironic cast towards its own position. With the advent of mechanical reproduction, “art” cancels itself out as it seeks to rarify Culture and to redeem (sublate) cultures.

This paradox of art—as both cultivation and disavowal of the historical milieu—has persistently vexed attempts to read Caribbean literature in a liberatory vein. Salvador Bueno, for example, in his collection of nineteenth-century Cuban *costumbrista* literature, argues for the distinct political logic of *costumbrismo* in the colonies, as opposed to its logic in Spain:

las burlas y sátiras a unas costumbres eran un pretexto para el ataque a la realidad política colonial. En la imposibilidad de enfrentar directamente al gobierno colonialista, ya que la censura imponía férrea mordaza imposible de quebrantar, los costumbristas encontraban en su práctica literaria un vehículo adecuado para la diatriba, la denuncia solapada. (xiv)

(the jests and satires of certain customs were a pretext to attack the political reality of the colonies. Given the impossibility of confronting directly the colonial government, due to the iron grip imposed by censorship, which was impossible to break, the *costumbristas* found in their literary praxis a suitable vehicle for diatribe, for camouflaged denunciation.)

Censorship and its evasion through “literary praxis,” however, are but one interpretation of colonial *costumbrismo*, and, in his reading of the work of Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros (1803-1866), Bueno acknowledges that the *independentista* streak of such writing contained within it “una actitud ambivalente ya que [Betancourt Cisneros] ama esos hábitos tradicionales y al

mismo tiempo, trata de superarlos, de suprimirlos” (“an ambivalent attitude, since Betancourt Cisneros loved those traditional habits and, at the same time, tried to overcome them, to suppress them”) (xvi). Bueno’s interpretation of Cuban *costumbrismo* carries within it the seeds of its own surpassing. The representation of custom and daily exercises serves to establish the text’s claims to authority *over* its representation and suppression of an investigation into said customs as products of socioeconomic dynamics.⁵

Such is the case in Alonso’s *El jíbaro*, originally published in 1849 and reissued in an expanded form between 1882 (Volume One, the original material) and 1883 (Volume Two, material added for the second edition). Alonso, who was born in 1822, collected published and unpublished texts for the first edition, which was brought out in Barcelona when he was 27.⁶ The second edition included twelve additional texts, a combination of poems, polemics, and stories, as were the texts for the first edition. As Modesto Rivera Rivera notes, the new material largely abandoned the *costumbrismo* of *El jíbaro* of 1849, and instead proliferates “las sátiras sociales y políticas engastadas en el rodaje de la alegoría y del progreso” (“social and political satires built into the system of allegory and progress”) (Rivera 99). Such satires, as I will suggest in my readings below, seek to consolidate the image of Puerto Rico as white and native-born, as was suggested in the text of 1849. In the context of Spanish imperialism’s changing dynamics, I will demonstrate how such a shift seeks to aestheticize politics through its extraction from everyday life and suppression of the terms of its own appearance.

Alonso’s *El jíbaro* produces an aestheticized vision of Puerto Rico through the creation of a sensuous form of accent and color for Puerto Rican “reality.” *Jíbaro* itself refers to the romanticized image of Puerto Rican yeomanry, the rural peasant figure that has become central

⁵ I examine the role of *costumbrismo* in sublating colonial customs under Iberian bourgeois values in Chapter Three.

⁶ Information on Alonso’s life and works is from Modesto Rivera Rivera.

to certain forms of Puerto Rican nationalism.⁷ This turn to the peasant represents a depth of the social that was impossible to represent legally through the always-deferred Special Laws that left Puerto Rico (along with Cuba and the Philippines) to the whims of the Governor-Generals that administered the various colonies, without integration into the national body. The imperial unity that resulted was nothing, the historian Josep Fradera has noted, but “la suma de una multiplicidad de particularismos” (“the sum of a multiplicity of particularisms”) (*Colonias* 65). Since the Spanish imperial government repeatedly invoked the special condition of the colonies as grounds for not extending the metropolitan laws to the territories of *ultramar* (overseas), what resulted was a chaotic, inconsistent, and arbitrary rule by successive regimes. This caused as many problems as it solved, as John Blanco has demonstrated in the case of the Philippines (*Frontier* 64-94).

The image of the colony that Alonso gives us, then, will not be the same as the “[a]estheticized political models” that Marc Redfield discusses in a very different context (22), even if they could be named in similar fashion. For where Redfield discusses these models as “not only conceal[ing] real social injustice . . . [and] actively produc[ing] violence as a by-product of their own impossible reliance on, and projection of, sociopolitical homogeneity and transparency” (22), the liberal nationalist reformism of Alonso’s text is only a modular form of this model. Aestheticizing the nation, for colonies in the Spanish Caribbean, may not have meant producing a transparent image of self-sameness, but of producing a distorted reflection of *difference from*—difference from the metropole, the United States, and even from themselves.

The aestheticization performed by Alonso is thus a rendering of Puerto Rico as *not* homogenous and transparent, as an image of stratification based on the distinctions between

⁷ See Francisco A. Scarano, “The *Jibaro* Masquerade,” for the origins of this mythology in the early nineteenth century, as well as Lillian Guerra for deployments within the twentieth century (67-121). On the concept of the “figure” that I am deploying here, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (71-72).

peninsulares, criollos, mestizos, and blacks, etc., each ordered in relation to the state and its Enlightenment discourse of organismic national culture.⁸ Within this discourse, as Pheng Cheah has argued, the community is “held together not by external force and coercion, but by bonds with the permanence of a higher nature, the rational bonds of spirit and all its products: art, philosophy, and more generally, culture” (*Spectral* 33). Following the eighteenth century, communities in modernity begin to be experienced as both delimited by and expressed in culture. In Alonso’s text, this cultural bond is now separated out as “culture” from the material bodies that produce it, while extending these same individual bodies into the social realm of “the nation” through their customs, habits, and products. Culture thus unites the individual material bodies in an interpersonal experience of communality in an event experienced as aesthetic.

If culture is understood to be the medium by which the individual enters into communal relations with others, the two sites in which such a linking is most evident in Alonso are the school and the dance. While the former site produces a liberal subject in the realm of the political, the latter produces a liberal subject in the realm of the social, articulated with discourses of collectivity through the same metaphor of culture and cultivation. As I will demonstrate below, while Alonso’s discussion of education is fixated on the production of a homogeneous set of models between metropole and colony—what I will call Alonso’s assimilationism—it is his discussion of the various dances of Puerto Rico that goes the furthest towards presenting an image of Puerto Rican society that can be used to organize the social body. In the process, however, Alonso must efface Puerto Rico’s history of racialized slavery to produce an image of social unity. This is done primarily through the separation of “culture” out from the socio-economic factors that structure its appearance.

⁸ This reading is heavily indebted to, but distinct from, Pheng Cheah’s discussion of organismic nationality in *Spectral Nationality*. The implications of the distinction I am drawing, which pertains to my object of analysis (colonial literature as opposed to postcolonial literature), will become clear in my analysis below.

A *Jíbaro* Customary

Diana Isabel Santiago has insisted that *costumbrismo* in Puerto Rico “no es una forma híbrida o marginal, sino un fenómeno liminar” (“is not a hybrid or marginal form, but a liminal phenomenon”) (43). Like the “frontier texts” that Wadda Ríos-Font has defined for Spanish literature (11), Santiago determines *costumbrismo* as a relational characteristic that manifests in a range of forms, rather than itself a particular form drawn from multiple traditions. Importantly, Santiago sees *costumbrismo*’s liminality as tinged with a history of colonialism in which the limen (or “frontera”) is both “la línea de separación entre lo conquistado y lo por conquistar” (“the separating line between the conquered and the conquering”) and “un lugar o tierra de nadie” (“an empty place or no-man’s-land”) (43). *Costumbrismo* thus connects the colonies to Spain and separates it from Spain, requiring a new optic for its understanding outside of the traditions emblemized by figures such as Ramón de Mesonero Romanos and Serafín Estébanez Calderón. To understand *costumbrismo* in the Americas, Santiago proposes thinking of it “como una ‘tierra de nadie’ donde se problematizan y se desconstruyen todos los conceptos tradicionales genéricos, como un espacio liminar de intersección de varios discursos literarios y nonliterarios, de literatura seria y popular, de política, ética, y estética, etc.” (“as a ‘no-man’s-land in which all the traditional generic concepts are problematized and deconstructed, as a liminal space of intersection for the various discourses, literary and non-literary, of serious and popular literature, of politics, ethics, and aesthetics, etc.”) (47). As a space between cognized divisions of propriety, *costumbrismo* is a fecund set of possibilities, the protean matter that can develop into a number of different discourses.

Though Santiago suggests there may be little formally linking *costumbrista* writings in the colony, the existence of such a diverse set of texts focused on depicting daily life may speak to the genre's popularity. Santiago describes an introduction from a *costumbrista* author who was "consciente de su método literario [que] demuestra no solamente que el artículo de costumbres era muy popular en la prensa de la época, sino también que disfrutaba de una alta reputación literaria" ("conscious of his literary method, which demonstrates not only that the *artículo de costumbres* was very popular in the press of the time, but also that it enjoyed a high literary reputation") (76). These statements suggest a problematic between cultures and Culture, as this "liminal phenomenon" of *costumbrismo* represented cultures (habits, tastes, idioms) as they were absorbed within the complex of Culture (the "alta reputación literaria" of Santiago's assessment). Even more complexly, the sheer volume of material surveyed by Santiago, as well as the comments she gathers from contemporary sources, demonstrates an intense popularity that may challenge Eagleton's notion of Culture as rarifying.

Costumbrismo's popularity, when translated to the colonial context as depictions of lower-class life, were utilized by participants in public intellectual life as a means of establishing authority. Thus Francisco Scarano cites a letter written in verse and published in a liberal newspaper, *El investigador*, in 1820, which satirizes the ascription of criminality to the impoverished rural masses of nineteenth-century Puerto Rico. Adopting the voice of the rural *jíbaro* in a trope that Scarano calls "the *jíbaro* masquerade," the speaker claims that the Spanish Constitution of 1812 (abolished by King Ferdinand VII in 1814, but reestablished in 1820) frees him to do whatever he desires, including "pegalle a su paire / una bofetá" ("to smack your father / on the face") and "á una mosa / la jecha á peidei" ("take a young woman / and ruin her honor")

(qtd. in Scarano, “The *Jíbaro*” 1409).⁹ This anarchistic response was meant as an “attack on the conservatives’ preposterous claims of anarchy and libertinism,” but resulted in a furor within liberal ranks (1409-11). This was in part, Scarano claims, because “in at least a couple of crucial ways, most people [in Puerto Rico] did not conform to liberal ideals: they were not willing to sell their labor to others for wages, and they failed to practice the self-control in all phases of their private and communal lives that would lead to their moral redemption” (1411). The comic adoption of the *jíbaro* both satirizes the conservative stance that feared the liberalism of the 1812 Constitution and demonizes the characteristics of the population that liberalism wanted to convert. The *jíbaro*, as Lillian Guerra has suggested, is here an object in a project of “the intellectualization of the Other” (7). The *jíbaro* as a trope, then, is meant to *depict* a certain (Puerto Rican) reality and to *correct* it. The *jíbaro* figure is thus a cultural response (i.e. poetic, that is, pertaining to Culture) to a cultural problem (i.e. habit, that is, pertaining to cultures). It is towards this cultural paradox that Alonso’s text is aimed.

The first edition of *El jíbaro* came out when its author, Manuel Alonso, was 27; he was seventy when the second edition was released, and the material and political differences that had occurred in Puerto Rico were in the forefront of his mind while compiling the latter. In his “Advertencia a los lectores” (“Notice to the Readers”) written for the second edition, Alonso observes that the colony has experienced a great deal of change, such as the establishment of “*Certámenes, Veladas literarias, Sociedades de recreo y, lo que aún es mejor, se empiezan a crear Bibliotecas públicas, y Sociedades protectoras de los niños y de la inteligencia*” (“*Contests, Literary Soirées, Recreation Societies, and, which is even better, Public Libraries, and Children’s Protection Societies and Intellectual Societies are starting to be created*”) (xxv, italics in original). Such institutions mark this “época de transición en la cual lo antiguo va des-

⁹ Translations are Scarano’s.

apareciendo, y lo nuevo viene a reemplazarlo” (“epoch of transition in which the old is disappearing, and the new is beginning to replace it”) (xxv), as an epoch in which Alonso had been able to publish frequently in journals and almanacs in the colony (Rivera 36-37).

Such progress, however, was not without its residual elements to be overcome: “Quedan sin embargo en pie la *Gallera* y los *Velorios* con no pocas cosas más que representan el pasado, para que no podamos envanecernos por nuestra reciente transformación todavía incompleta” (“Nonetheless, the *Cockpit* remains standing, and the *Velorios*,¹⁰ with many other things that represent the past, such that we cannot be overly proud of our recent transformation, yet incomplete”) (xxv, italics in original). It is perhaps too easy a target to point out how the modern (“lo nuevo,” in Alonso’s formulation) is a classed concept, where recreational and child welfare societies will replace the cockpit and lower-class dancing. But this in fact marks a clear example of Scarano’s “*jíbaro* masquerade,” as the criticisms that Alonso lodges under the authenticating sign of the *jíbaro* are precisely towards those aspects of communal life that make “identity culture” (as Eagleton would call it) a valuable ideology for Puerto Rican nationalist discourse. In other words, if the *gallera* and the *velorio* are what most clearly mark Puerto Rico as distinct from metropolitan culture—at least in and as they approximate other Caribbean sites through regional dances and the fondness in many Spanish colonies for cockfighting¹¹—they are also a vulgar past that should (and will) be overcome through liberalization of the political economy.

This progress is meant to bring the colony into uniformity with the comparative modernity of the metropole. (In fact, the modernity of progress for which Alonso calls and its links to

¹⁰ The *velorio* is a popular celebration that usually includes dancing, singing, and storytelling, as well as feasting and general revelry.

¹¹ For example, Francisco Manrique Cabrera, a literary historian of Puerto Rico, notes that “el jíbaro nuestro ha creado en torno a tal deporte [riñas de gallos] en palabras y expresiones una verdadera lengua gallística que ha debido de tener más aprovechamiento artístico del que realmente ha tenido en las letras puertorriqueñas” (“our *jíbaro* has created in regards to this sport [of cockfighting] a true cockfighting language of words and expressions that has been used to extensive artistic effect in Puerto Rican letters”) (99). His example is, ironically, Alonso’s own *El jíbaro*.

imperial concepts of temporality will become more familiar in the following chapter, through the *costumbrista* fiction of W. E. Retana and José Montero y Vidal.) Writing of the inadequacies of insular education in an *escena* from the first volume (of 1849), Alonso notes that jurisprudence and medicine are unavailable for study in the colony, and the philosophical education that is, is insufficient (22). The graduates of the colonial schools, Alonso claims, are mocked upon heading to the Peninsula by “los que con mucha razón ven en la Filosofía el fundamento de todas las carreras literarias” (“those who, with good reason, see in Philosophy the foundation of all of the literary careers”) (23). As the coursework that Alonso suggests makes clear, the “literary careers” include everything from geography and history to rhetoric and mathematics.

The disjuncture experienced by colonials in the metropole is a more widely felt unevenness in the colony. Spain in the mid-1800s experienced rather rapid development in many areas, including railroads, electricity, and telegraphy, despite the tumultuous decades of the Carlist Wars (Tortella 115-55, 217-18). Alonso’s call for imperial uniformity is thus a call for modernization. Curiously, however, he does *not* see it as arising from the demands of government, but from the individual. In regards to his call for educational reform, he claims that “el pedir que el Gobierno haya de pensar en todo, sin que nada se le indique, saben muy bien todos los hombres de medianas luces que es pedir un imposible” (“the demand for the Government to think of everything, without specifying anything, every half-enlightened man knows is to demand the impossible”) (28). Even the “half-enlightened man”—certainly an apt description of those graduating from the colonial schools that Alonso is condemning—“knows” that the government cannot be expected to answer every demand of the citizen. A clear frustration with government inaction is evident here, but so is an underlying liberalism that sees the solution to social problems in the hands of the social body itself.

Given the record on education of the colonial government in Puerto Rico, Alonso's dismissal of centralized reform programs seems well founded. Though a mandate to educate "blancos, pardos [y] morenos libres" ("whites, *pardos*, and free blacks") had been handed down in 1770, still two-thirds of Puerto Ricans in the interior remained illiterate (Gómez Tejera and Cruz López 63).¹² This suggests that education was still not as widely disseminated across the colony as the mandate sought to make it. (It also suggests a racial equanimity coming from the office of Governor-General Miguel de Muesas that, as I will demonstrate below, was uncomfortable for Alonso in the mid-nineteenth century.) In the proposition above, Alonso invokes instead a certain tension arising on the part of *criollos* no longer willing to accept the imperially policed difference between those born in the colonies and those born in the metropole, a difference that displaces any perceived phenotypical or ethno-cultural difference. Alonso's liberalism may be attributable to the economic development of Puerto Rico that followed the scathing report of mercantilistic practices by Alejandro O'Reilly in 1765, which argued that the limiting of port access and exclusive trade policies were keeping the island from developing more prosperous industries.¹³ But if the liberalism of the passage above can be explained by a shift in imperial trade policies, the *criollismo* evident here might be more directly related to the limited and sporadic expansion of colonial representation in the Spanish government, as well as the fitfully progressive abolition of racial slavery.

The educational system in Puerto Rico was first introduced in legislation of 1865, in the Decreto Orgánico (Organic Decree) of that year. This decree meant to standardize pedagogical training for teachers in the colony, as well as expand the educational opportunities of the population (Gómez Tejera and Cruz López 89). Resources for enforcement continued to lag,

¹² Carmen Gómez Tejera and David Cruz López do point out, however, that this was still twice the literacy rate of immigrants to the colony in the late eighteenth century (61-62).

¹³ For more on this report, particularly its effects on commercial politics, see James Dietz (10-12).

however, and perhaps one of the decree's more notable accomplishments was in its use after the fall of the Second Spanish Republic in 1874, as the basis for Governor-General Laureano Sanz to remove educators he felt to be antipathetic to the restored monarchy and replace them with teachers from Spain (105). By 1880, a mere two years before the second edition of *El jíbaro* was issued, Governor-General Don Eulogio Despujols had a census of insular schools taken that painted a grim picture of insufficient materials, inadequate facilities, and teacher despair. Despujols issued a new Decreto Orgánico that centralized pedagogical power in the capital, but insufficient funding for salaries and facilities continued to plague Puerto Rico, particularly in the rural areas, through the end of the century (109-10).

Many of these reforms, however, can be seen in light of a hemispheric history of revolution and educational distribution. Due to the lack of secondary schools and universities in the colony itself throughout the Spanish colonial period, many Puerto Rican students were sent to schools in Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, Santo Domingo (the present-day Dominican Republic), and the United States of America (121). However, following the revolutions of the Spanish-American republics and the Republican movement in Spain itself, sending Puerto Rican students abroad risked their returning “poseídos de ideas subversivas” (“possessed by subversive ideas”), as Gómez Tejera and Cruz López denominate it (125). Insular educational reform, then, must be situated in a broader history of revolutionary sentiment and threats “from outside.”

So, too, might the expansion of the political sphere into the customs of the colony, as narrated by Alonso. In a chapter on political parties in the second edition of *El jíbaro*, he notes that, even if it is not known what debates were occurring during much of Puerto Rico's history, this does not mean they were not taking place: “El silencio que se advierte en la historia. . . no quiere decir que no hubiese diferencias en la opinión, en cuanto al modo de gobernar esta Isla”

(“The notable silence one senses in our history does not mean that there were not differences of opinion as to the mode of governing the Island”) (176). This silence, it turns out, emanates from the metropole, but has particular effects in the colony. Most notable among these is the sense that Alonso gives of the silence being more a sympathetic response to the oppression in the Peninsula than a similar or exceptional case. Thus the silence following the debates over the destiny of the indigenous peoples of the Americas in Puerto Rico can be explained because “se sintieron [en Puerto Rico], como era natural, los efectos de la opresión que los gobiernos ejercieron en la Península y no es extraño que los habitantes de esta Isla callaran, cuando sus hermanos de la otra parte del Océano habían enmudecido” (“the effects of the oppression exercised in the Peninsula were felt [in Puerto Rico], as was natural, and it is not strange that the inhabitants of the Island kept quiet, when their siblings on the other side of the Ocean had fallen silent”) (176-77). The structure of this sentence suggests that suppression of dissent was carried out only or primarily in the Peninsula. Meanwhile, the clause attached to the silence of Puerto Rico at that time—“no es extraño”—implies that such silence *might not* have been the case. It is not strange that they were silent, Alonso suggests, but they might not have been. Finally, the verb “se sintieron” (“were felt”) is both linked to its subject (“the effects of the oppression”) and separated from it by a clause that renders this effect “natural.” Attempting to forge the link between the Peninsula and the Island into a unity of siblings just highlights the unnaturalness of its transoceanic effects, rendering the cultural effect in the colony *as if* it were natural. Nonetheless, Alonso is clear that the effects themselves took place in the Peninsula, and this distinction is important.

The “nature” posited here resembles the organismic metaphor of the political body as discussed by Cheah. It is also an effect of acculturation to the State *as* a body. As Cheah argues, it is only through a moral education that “the harmonious unity of an empirical consciousness in

general” can be cultivated, and, as a result, that individuals can be organized into “a coherent whole” (*Spectral* 94). In other words, the experience of the political unity of the State as a social body is the work of a “culture [that] infuses the resulting collective with rational dynamism. It changes the state by strengthening the ties between it and its citizens. Through its relation to culture, the state becomes organicized” (*Spectral* 94). By means of education, culture thus linked the State to the dynamism of the social body and produced the experience of the State as organically linked to the individual, “as was natural.” The artificiality of this sentiment, established as it is through “Organic Decree” and the importation of teachers from the Peninsula, is rendered invisible through the discourse of family and natural law.

But there is something else at work in Alonso’s passage above, namely sympathy. For the tone of this passage suggests not that what is experienced in one part of the (social) body is experienced in all—in fact, the disposition of laws under the Viceroyalty at the time of which Alonso is speaking would mean that it was not experienced homogeneously across the body of the imperial State—but rather that what is experienced in one part causes a similar, but distinct, effect in another part. If their brothers in the Peninsula “had been silenced,” the residents of Puerto Rico would also “keep quiet.” What is heteronomous in the metropole, is autonomous in the colony. Alonso seeks to explain the origin of political parties in the colony in this way, as well, noting that at the time the second edition of *El jíbaro* was released, “[a]traviesa el país una época de transición, reflejo de lo que ocurre en la madre patria, y que *aquí reviste el carácter que le imprimen las circunstancias locales*” (“an epoch of transition traversed this country, reflection of what occurred in the Mother Country, and *which here is cloaked in the character that is imprinted by local circumstances*”) (Alonso 175, emphasis added). What is more, Alonso limits himself to an exposition of how “esta transformación influye en nuestras costumbres, sin intentar

la defensa de opiniones políticas” (“this transformation influenced our customs, without attempting to defend political opinions”) (175). The “madre patria” and its political strife are here reflected in “el carácter” of Puerto Rico that nonetheless has been imprinted by local circumstances. In fact, the tribulations of the Peninsula seem here to adorn the surface of Puerto Rican character, while leaving untouched the impression (“imprimir”) of local circumstance. These effects, he continues, can be observed solely at the level of customs, leaving politics *itself* outside of the transoceanic sympathy. The political strife of the metropole is translated into the daily affect of the colony, removed from the conscious strife of the subject and placed in the social experience of the colony. Alonso here speaks as if there are still no *subjects* in Puerto Rico, merely moving bodies on the cusp of self-realization. It is thus that the period of transition in the metropole is both dressing (*revistiendo*) and imprinting (*imprimiendo*), both adhering to the character formed by other factors and influencing its customs.

Such an effect—both superficial and deeply felt—may be the result of its translational nature, but it also suggests that Puerto Rico at this time suffers from a type of false embellishment. This second possibility is highlighted by Alonso’s criticism of political practice—what he calls “la práctica”—as violating noble ideals (179). As politicians may use immoral methods to achieve these ideals, Alonso opines that “las palabras patria, progreso, integridad, libertad, unidad nacional y otras, cuando detrás de ellas se ocultan las ideas de egoísmo, especulación, tiranía, ambición y falsedad, no darán otro resultado que la ruina del país” (“the words patria, progress, integrity, liberty, national unity, and others, when behind them are hidden the ideas of egotism, speculation, tyranny, ambition, and falseness, produce the ruin of the country as their only result”) (179). This passage reveals that, for Alonso, it is the disconnect between cultural ideals and the praxis (“la práctica”) used to achieve them that is the

most threatening aspect of cultural development (*Bildung*, in Cheah's account). Alonso thus utilizes the *jibaro* masquerade to produce the subject of a cohesive culture that does not depend on the cosmopolitan culture of some *criollo* factions, which is in turn dependent on the metropole for what Salvador Brau calls, in his preface to Alonso's text, "comercio intelectual" ("intellectual commerce") (Alonso vi). Neither does this cohesion depend on political opinion or political praxis. Rather, it is a cultural milieu encoded in customs and emotions, written into existence by the colonial situation but not directly linked to its formal structure. The figure of this colonial custom as embodied in Puerto Rico is the *jibaro*, a figure whose relation to the becoming-nation obscures the very history of the colonial customs it is meant to embody.

"Generalized" Culture and Racial Cultivation

Zilka Janer has sought to explain the turn to the figure of the impoverished *jibaro* by *criollo* intellectuals through recourse to subaltern theory derived from British imperialism in India. Since the *jibaro*'s poverty, to Janer, seems a prime target for the type of demonization that the *gaucho* was subject to in Argentine nation-building discourse,¹⁴ she wonders why the *jibaro* was not stigmatized for his "barbarism" in order to elevate the cosmopolitan *criollo*'s social standing (12-13). However, the answer to this question seems to lie in an off-hand statement that Janer makes in the same passage, where she mentions that "[t]he early nation-building period [in Puerto Rico] was characterized by an eloquent silence about the African component of Puerto Rican society and culture" (12). While Janer defers interrogating this silence until her work on the 1930's—when more cultural products highlighting African culture become visible—I would

¹⁴ This, in itself, seems a reduction based on a limited number of materials, largely written by the one-time president of Argentina, Domingo F. Sarmiento, particularly his *Facundo*. Representations of the *gaucho* even a little bit later in the nineteenth century—e.g. José Hernández's narrative poem, *Martín Fierro* of 1872—are much more willing to draw the *gaucho* into national discourse, in part due to its receding in importance in the national economy. For more on the figure of the *gaucho*, see Josefina Ludmer.

suggest the figure of the *jíbaro* is itself the product of that “eloquent silence,” as it sublimates the difference of Puerto Rico within a racially-cleansed fantasy of national origin.¹⁵

Even in an *escena* from the first edition of *El jíbaro*, Alonso demonstrates this racial sleight-of-hand. In his article “Bailes de Puerto Rico” (“Dances of Puerto Rico”), Alonso seeks to set Puerto Rican culture within a relativistic framework that creates a limited set of parameters for inclusion in what will be called “Puerto Rico.” Alonso states early in the piece that “[t]odos los pueblos tienen bailes acomodados a su gusto, clima, civilización y costumbres” (“all peoples have dances accommodated to their taste, climate, civilization, and customs”) (34), a catholic gesture that suggests equanimity. However, the criteria to which these dances must conform depend on a particular play of anthropological, geographical, and aesthetic features. It is unclear which sets the terms for which, but to the extent that taste (“gusto”) enters this conversation, Alonso calls on the individual to accede to developments outside of, but corresponding to, the individual (“clima, civilización y costumbres”). These developments are then marked racially and geographically, as Alonso provides brief descriptions of the dances of “los negros de Africa,” “los chinos,” and “los salvajes de América” (“the blacks of Africa,” “the Chinese,” and “the savages of America”) (34). Such descriptions conflate “Culture” and “cultures,” in Eagleton’s terminology, as the hierarchizing gesture of “salvaje” (“savage”) sneaks into a syntactic spot that could easily be held by the more descriptive “indio” (“Indian”).

The civilizational timeline suggested by “the savages of America” is enhanced by Alonso’s following description of the types of dance visible in Puerto Rico. There are, he claims, “dos clases de bailes: unos de sociedad, que no son otra cosa que el eco repetido allí de los de Europa;

¹⁵ Cf. Etienne Balibar (99-105), who states that “the idea of eugenics is always latent in the reciprocal relation between the ‘bourgeois’ family and a society which takes the nation form” (102). In fact, it is the very non-bourgeois quality of the *jíbaro* that makes its centrality to late nineteenth-century nationalist discourse a matter of (legitimate) families and nations, which it had not—the liberal argument goes—been before. The family and nation thus figured around the *jíbaro* is cleansed of racial representation and representability.

y otros, llamados de *garabato*, que son propios del país, aunque dimanen a mi entender de los nacionales españoles mezclados con los de los primitivos habitantes” (“two types of dances: society dances, which are nothing else but the echo repeated from such events in Europe; and others, called *garabatos*, which are particular to the country, although they spring, in my mind, from the Spanish nationals mixed with those of the primitive inhabitants”) (34). He immediately follows (in the same sentence!) this binary division of Puerto Rican dances with the acknowledgement that there are also “algunos de los de Africa, introducidos por los negros de aquellas regiones, pero que *nunca se han generalizado*, llamándoseles *bailes de bomba*, por el instrumento que sirve en ellos de música” (“some of the ones from Africa, introduced by the blacks from those regions, but which *have never been generalized*, are called *bomba* dances, for the instrument that is used for the music that accompanies them”) (34, emphasis added). The remainder of the essay describes in minute detail both the *bailes de sociedad* and the *garabatos*, without describing the *bailes de bomba*.¹⁶

There are two reasons that Alonso states for why such dances merit no more attention: the first is their foreign origin (supposedly in Africa); the second is their lack of being “generalized.” The first justification, of course, does not hold up, for if their foreign origin disqualified them from interest, the *bailes de sociedad*—that “echo repeated” from Europe—and the *bailes de garabato*—which come from a mix of Spanish dances—would also be resigned to obscurity. The second reason is much more curious, as Alonso dismisses the *bailes de bomba* initially for this reason, and then dismisses them again for the same reason at the end. At the end of the essay, however, he notes their existence (along with “los [bailes] de los criollos de Curazao,” or “the dances of the *criollos* of Curaçao”) only “porque siendo muchos aumentan la grande variedad de danzas que un extranjero puede ver en sola una Isla, y hasta sin moverse de una población”

¹⁶ For a brief history of the *bomba* and how it fits into a broader Puerto Rican dance culture, see Alma Concepción.

(“because they greatly augment the wide variety of dances that a foreigner can see in just one Island, and almost without moving from one village”) (40). The fact that all of these can be seen in a single town calls into question what exactly Alonso means by “generalized,” as they are widely enough spread that Alonso expects any given foreigner to encounter them, and therefore feels the need to explain them. That they also contribute to the cultural expression of the single island in Alonso’s reading further implies their constitutive role in the cultural unity of the colony.

The difference that Alonso sees between these various dances, then, is a question of canonicity, that is, a judgment of an object based not on its sensorial experience in the subject alone but on its exemplarity as regards generalizable rules. While enumerating the various dances that may be seen at the *garabato*, Alonso observes that “[l]os bailes de *garabato* tienen sus reglas, que se observan con todo rigor, y que nadie que toma parte en ellos está dispensado de guardar estrictamente” (“*garabato* dances have rules, which are observed with all rigor, and from which no one who takes part in them is exempted from keeping strictly”) (39). Though the relation to the sentence that follows is unclear, it is perhaps because of these strict regulations that Alonso says that “algunas veces he visto bailar en ellos a personas muy distinguidas” (“sometimes I have seen very distinguished persons dancing in them”) and that such persons “guardan todas las atenciones y finura compatibles con su clase, sus hábitos y educación” (“maintain all the attentions and refinements appropriate to their class, habits, and education”) (39). Thus, although the *garabato* as a form arises from the more impoverished sectors of society, its very existence *as formed* (i.e. governed by rules) provides the opportunity for persons of distinct classes to enter into its rules (so long as these remain strictly observed). Interestingly, such participation does *not*, to Alonso’s eye, modify or challenge the social habits of the

participant, so that “very distinguished persons” may retain the comportment arising from “their class, habits, and education.” In other words, for Alonso, dance cannot change custom, even as it may offer opportunities to cross customary lines (one-sidedly, it would seem).

The ambiguous entrance to the *garabato* is seen in the poem that Alonso inserts in *El jíbaro* after the note on “Bailes de Puerto Rico.” Called simply “El baile de garabato” (“The *Garabato* Dance”), the poem narrates an encounter at a recent dance hosted by the cousin of the eponymous *jíbaro*. During the festivities, a man named Cilirio, enters the dance, claiming to have been promised to one of the women attending. After a brief fight between the host and the uninvited man, Cilirio’s fiancée steps out of the corner, and reveals that it was all a misunderstanding. As she says to the now-disorderly crowd of the *garabato*,

En broma le ije a Cilirio
Que no sería capás
De esbaratal este baile,
Y er lo ha jecho de beydá.
Su intención no era ofendel
A unas gentes tan honraas,
Sino dal a conocey
Que pol mí no teme a naa. (45)
(I joked to Cilirio
That he couldn’t
Bust up this dance,
Which he really has, now.
He didn’t mean to offend

Such honorable folks,
He just wanted to make known,
He didn't fear nothing, on my account.)¹⁷

With the revelation that Cilirio was merely trying to prove his *machismo* to impress a woman, the former combatants can laugh and shake hands. The dance returns to its former peace, the narrator notes, “[m]enos cinco u seis jeríos / Que se fueron a curay” (“except for five or six wounded / Who left to be treated”) (46).

This narrative poem illustrates two complex and competing arguments in Alonso's jumbled “Bailes de Puerto Rico:” 1) Order in the *garabato* is maintained through the maintenance of order, relying on the individual's propriety not to “bust up (*esbaratal/desbaratar*) this dance;” 2) The *garabato*'s rules are such that anyone who knows them can maintain them. While the former argument rests, in reality, on tautological grounds, the latter assumes the perfect accessibility and equality of the *garabato*'s rules. And yet the narrative in the poem suggests something quite different, as the silliness of the feigned fight leads to multiple injuries, shrugged off by the narrator's ironic tone in the final lines. Though Cilirio and his fiancée's skewed courtship can be absorbed into the overall structure of the dance through the “amistá” (“friendship”) of Cilirio and the narrator's cousin at the end (45), the couple's heteronormative display sends “un mosito / Benío de la Suidá / Muy agentao y muy tieso” (“a young man / Who came from the city / Very stuck-up and uptight”) diving under a table (45). The customs of the rural couple appear to the urbanite as a “juracán” (“hurricane”) (45). The unevenness in response to this couple's display—with the host embracing them at the end, while five or six attendees are hauled off to the doctor's and a young man from the city cowers under a

¹⁷ My translation here is loose, and is meant to hint at the informal style of the original while shying away from the racialized and class-based vernacular present in the original's non-standard Spanish.

table—suggests miscommunications between sectors. The city boy’s pretensions are exposed by the *jíbaro* Cirilio’s violence, his dissembling left on the dance floor, while the masculinity of Cirilio, as well as his ultimately good nature, are incorporated into the dance.

“El baile de garabato” appears to contradict “Bailes de Puerto Rico,” which insisted on the accessibility of all participants, since the poem excludes the cowardliness of the urbanite while incorporating the rural masculinity of Cirilio. But the overcoming of the citydweller’s pretension and the exposition of his “true” nature is, in fact, in line with Alonso’s insistence that “very distinguished people” who enter the *garabato* “maintain all the attentions and refinements appropriate with their class, habits, and education” (39). The dissembling of the citydweller is exposed as such just as order is restored in the dance. If the customs and habits of the distinguished do not inhibit them from participation in the rules of the *garabato*, it is precisely because there *are* rules (cf. Alonso’s dismissal of the *velorio*, discussed above). Cirilio’s rupture of them in the poem keeps the order true and universal, inserting the question of *jíbaro* authenticity into a gathering that otherwise might succumb to social-climbing and dissemblance. In this picture, culture is linked organically to the diverse social strata of Puerto Rico, while incorporating violent resistance into the smooth operation of Puerto Ricanness. This violence can be seen as well in the “violent” disruption of Alonso’s smooth, standardized Spanish in the prose pieces by the *jíbaro* dialect of the poems, which emphasizes the particularity of Puerto Rican linguistics while couching it between “model” language, as if to conduct the *jíbaro* into a more broadly understood version of itself.

The appeal to authenticity therefore marks the limit of Alonso’s theory of education as the lynchpin of progress, and progress as the ideal of culture. There has been quite a lot written on the role of education in the production of modern, liberal subjects. Such discussions often return

to training in aesthetics as training in ethical socialization, since, according to David Lloyd, “[t]he universal claims of aesthetic culture,” through their denial of personal interest, actually advance “the bourgeois interest in forging a sphere of purely formal equality and identity for all mankind, irrespective of cultural or economic distinctions” (“Kant’s Examples” 34).¹⁸ The development that, in Lloyd’s account, seeks to train the student through the example of the teacher inevitably confronts its own limits when the student achieves the level of autonomization that the teacher represents. Thus, “[t]he students’ disappointment in the Master, itself a crucial moment in aesthetic education, is the fulfillment of a process of exemplification whose goal is to produce autonomy of judgment in the student” (41). The autonomy of judgment, once it is a part of the student’s own judgmental apparatus and subjectivity, risks becoming anarchistic if not bound to self-regulation (Blanco, *Frontier* 9). Thus the cultivation of judgment, though necessary for the establishment of liberal communities, provokes the very grounds of their potential undoing by the necessary production of autonomy.

In a later work, Lloyd—along with Paul Thomas—cites this earlier article to argue that, by means of this aesthetical/ethical education, the school comes to be the most effective medium for “the transfer of the subject from the private domain of the family into the public world of the political, not by teaching civics but by representing representation” (Lloyd and Thomas 20). The autonomy that risks the undoing of a liberal community in Lloyd’s previous article becomes linked through the educational apparatus to the state itself, thus framing autonomy within the horizon of the state itself. While this may be a relatively sound argument for Lloyd and Thomas’s primary example of the British working classes, a certain assumption of transparency in pedagogy is assumed here that cannot hold in the case of nineteenth-century Puerto Rico. Alonso’s appeal to expand educational opportunity in the colony belies the much larger problem

¹⁸ See my discussion of Kant, aesthetics, and universality in Chapter One.

of non-representativity, the fact that in the case of the Spanish colonies in the nineteenth century, ruled by Special Laws and intermittently excluded from parliamentary representation, the State did not represent or resemble the colonial subjects that it claimed as its own. (The removal of Puerto Rican teachers in 1874 for fear of sedition and their replacement by instructors from Spain, discussed above, seems a prime example of this.) This is both why authenticity is so crucial to Alonso's theory of culture and why it appears as violence in "El baile de garabato," since it must be incorporated into a (national) community that is antithetical to the (imperial) state.

Yet for all the differences, the politics of education that Alonso expounds in *El jíbaro* does contain many of the elements that Lloyd and Thomas locate in British education of the same era. The primary goal of education for Alonso was, as Rivera notes, "la integración del sentimiento patriótico mediante la enseñanza y la educación del pueblo" ("the integration of patriotic sentiment by means of teaching and the education of the people") (119). This "patriotic sentiment," however, contains a certain ambivalence in the colonial setting in which it was fostered. Rivera understands Alonso to argue that, "en la determinación del fin de la educación debe entrar lo referente a la cultura y a sus valores; y aquélla debe formar a los individuos de tal modo que sean capaces y aptos, para participar como miembros independientes en las tareas comunes de la cultura de la sociedad a que pertenecen" ("in the determination of the goal of education, a reference to culture and its values must enter; and this must form individuals in such a manner that they are capable and fit to participate as independent members in the common tasks of the culture of the society to which they belong") (119). The pupil is intended to become an independent member of society, with the individualized goal of the communal work of society itself, that is, society's "self-organization." To the extent that the pupil's goal is to be a

part of a self-organizing whole, the pupil is, in fact, *not* a good colonial subject, since colonial society was intended to be subject completely to the edicts of the Governor-General in this era.¹⁹ Thus, the goals of Alonso—at least according to Rivera—differ radically from the school as site of suturing the liberal subject to the state: “la educación según Alonso, es el método *sine qua non* para llegar a estructurar con probabilidades amplias de éxito un Puerto Rico autosuficiente, que pueda bastarse, sostenerse y gobernarse por sus esfuerzos propios” (“according to Alonso, education is the method *sine qua non* to structure, with ample probability of success, a Puerto Rico that is self-sufficient, which can supply itself, sustain itself, and govern itself by its own power”) (119). This self-sufficiency would come to fruition in the most curious and problematic way, beginning with Puerto Rico being granted autonomous status by the Spanish empire in 1897, which took effect in 1898 and lasted only about a month, until the United States invasion (Wagenheim 188-89).²⁰

As I suggested above, the relation between peninsula and colony is not one of transparency, but rather of displaced causes and effects linked by sympathy. Additionally, as Alonso suggests in his *escena* “Bailes de Puerto Rico,” the colony itself is likewise incapable of representation in the sense usually accorded to the nation-state. Alonso’s *escena* marks out at least four separate cultural fragments, of which only two are sufficiently “generalized” to be worthy of discussion. In turning our attention to the distinct dances, Alonso appears to be attempting their overcoming. Rivera has argued as much in his discussion of *El jíbaro* generally,

¹⁹ Such limits became all too clear under the rule of Valeriano Weyler, the “Butcher of Cuba,” who has the dubious honor of ordering the erection of the world’s first concentration camps for civilians during the Cuban Revolutionary War of 1896-98 (Tone 193-224). Weyler had previously served as Governor-General of the Philippines, as well as holding various posts in the Peninsula.

²⁰ Ramón Soto-Crespo argues that this status is the first acknowledgement of an “anomalous” political and cultural status that he calls “the borderland state” (xxi). Such a state, Soto-Crespo argues, is cultivated and theorized by Puerto Rican intellectuals and politicians up to the present day. Soto-Crespo does not look to the nineteenth century, though, for how autonomy was imagined *within* empire as a possible and desirable goal by nation-building intellectuals.

seeing it as a product of “la fragmentación de la moral y de las honestas costumbres de nuestro pueblo. (“the fragmentation of morals and of the honest customs of our people”) (117). Rivera then claims that, for Alonso, *El jíbaro* serves as an “escuela de costumbres” (“school of customs”) (117), and that Alonso’s educational vision is a patriotic one (118). This vision of self-sufficiency is also, as in the *bailes de garabato*, a vision of self-imposed regulation that denies Africans and their descendants in Puerto Rico, as well as the history of slavery that brought them to the island colony. By celebrating a cross-class linking of various Spanish (and even Taíno) cultures, Alonso thus evades the more vexing questions of cross-racial community.

This vision was shared by other Puerto Rican intellectuals of the period, such as Alonso’s near-contemporary, Francisco del Valle Atilas, a medical doctor and writer. His 1887 work, *El campesino puertorriqueño, sus condiciones físicas, intelectuales y morales, causas que las determinan y medios para mejorarlas* (*The Puerto Rican Peasant, His Physical, Intellectual and Moral Conditions, Causes that Determine Them, and Means of Improving Them*), combines physiological discourse and linguistic and literary analysis with a sociological aim in the exposition of the rural population of Puerto Rico. His focus on the interior of the colony, away from the urban centers that ring the coast of the island, is therefore similar to the search for Puerto Rican identity in the figure of the *jíbaro* (Valle Atilas 14). As with the reformist progressivism of Alonso, Valle Atilas seeks to remedy the ills of the interior, which, he claims, is an exception to the “tesis general, [que] afirman los higienistas, ‘que la salud y vitalidad de las gentes del campo son muy superiores á las del grupo urbano’” (“general thesis, [which] the hygienists affirm, ‘that the health and vitality of country people are superior to those of the urban grouping’”) (14). The urban scene, closer to the watchful gaze of imperial bureaucrats and institutions, requires less reform, in Valle Atilas’s account, than the rural spaces that have more

effectively evaded governmental surveillance. The exceptionalism of Puerto Rico, then, resides in its rural population, in the *jíbaro* and the desperate need to reform him. (Again, the parallels with Retana and Montero y Vidal's depictions of the Philippines will become evident.)

Reform is staged in three parts in Valle Atilés's text: reform of the physical condition (72-93); reform of the intellectual condition (121-26); and reform of the moral condition (152-61). For all of these, Valle Atilés prescribes instruction (see 81-82, 129, 154-55). In fact, the guiding trope for "progress" in this text is not "reform," but "education," whether it be "la educación moral" ("moral education") and "la educación religiosa" ("religious education") needed to combat moral lassitude (155), or the "aumento de escuelas en estos últimos años" ("increase in schools in these past few years"), which has improved the physical condition of the peasants through teacher oversight of hygiene (82).²¹ The remedy to colonial ills, Valle Atilés insists, is schooling.

Most obviously this can be seen in the recommendations for improving the intellectual character of the *jíbaro*. The common-sense character of these reforms for Valle Atilés is evidenced in part by its being the shortest set of recommendations. The intellectual characteristics of the *jíbaro*, as Valle Atilés describes them, are like diamonds in the rough. Analyzing *jíbaro* poetry, the most developed of their "artes útiles" ("useful arts"), Valle Atilés comments that in "muchos de los *cantares* jíbaros se descubre una naturaleza poética rica en fantasía y no exenta de imaginación y viveza" ("many of the *jíbaro* lyrics, one discovers a poetic nature rich in fantasy and not without imagination and liveliness") (106, italics in original). If these lyrics lack in beauty, he says, it is due to a fault of education, for "la imaginación no basta para producir lo bello, si no vienen en su auxilio otras facultades del espíritu convenientemente

²¹ These two things, of course, are not divorced, as religious institutions still provided a large share of the educational opportunities on the island; see Gómez Tejera and Cruz López 89-118

cultivadas” (“imagination is not sufficient to produce beauty, if other advisably cultivated faculties of spirit do not come to its aid”) (106-07). Cultivation appears here as the bringing to manifestation what is latent in the material at hand. What the school does is not to create or import faculties that were not already present in the colony, but to make them approximate perfection (121).²² The perfect society is one in which the maximum number of people can express themselves *in legitimate forms*, hence the lengthy disparagement of *jíbaro* pronunciation in Valle Atilés’ text and the jarring contrast of Alonso’s *jíbaro* poetry and standardized prose.

Slavery and Constitutive Exposure

Though Valle Atilés and Alonso claim the figure of the *jíbaro* as representative of the population of Puerto Rico, it is only possible to do so by bracketing out certain sectors of that population. Yet these sectors surface repeatedly in the assimilationist rhetoric of the liberal intellectuals, as phantoms of the past or atavistic remnants of history. As I demonstrated in “Bailes de Puerto Rico” above, the anxiety-producing sectors include the Taíno Indian population (disingenuously presented as relegated to the past), as well as the African-descended population, which has persisted even after the end of slavery in 1873. This bracketing seems to be of a piece with Alonso’s general racist abolitionism, a not uncommon position among opponents of slavery at the time.²³ However, while Christopher Schmidt-Nowara views Alonso as part of a colonial intellectual circle committed “to ‘whitening’ as the solution to the social

²² Valle Atilés here quotes from a memorandum by Dr. Gabriel Ferrer, honored by the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, a forum that Valle Atilés helped found, which offered university-level instruction at the time of its founding, as well as fomented public intellectual life. See Gómez Tejera and Cruz López 127-28.

²³ For an account of Puerto Rican abolitionism around the time of the first edition of *El jíbaro*, see Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (*Empire and Antislavery* 37-50). For some suggestion of how this contradictory attitude manifested in Cuban abolitionist literature, see also Doris Sommer’s discussion of Cirilo Villaverde’s *Cecilia Valdés* (187-210). One has only to think of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to recognize that this was a common attitude among white abolitionists throughout the Atlantic world.

instability and political marginalization” of the Caribbean colonies (*Empire and Antislavery* 37), the texts of *El jíbaro* suggest the impossibility of whiteness, even in a post-slavery society.

In a selection from the second volume of *El jíbaro*, “1833-1883 ¿Perdemos o ganamos?” (“1833-1883: Have We Lost or Gained?”), Alonso applauds the abolition of slavery on the island as a moral victory for the people of Puerto Rico. Writing in 1883, he notes that “[l]a abolición de la esclavitud llevada a cabo hace sólo diez años, es suficiente para probar que en moralidad hemos ganado y no poco” (“the abolition of slavery put in place only ten years ago is sufficient to prove that we have advanced in morality, and more than a little”) (Alonso 159). His justification for this statement, however, will strike modern ears as quite racist:

Aquellos seres desgraciados, que se vendían públicamente en los almacenes de la marina de esta Capital y en otros puntos de la Isla, llevaban al seno de las familias la corrupción más degradante. La prostitución, el concubinato y el envilecimiento del trabajo eran los frutos inmediatos de aquella iniquidad, que, para honra de España, abolieron las Cortes, con aplauso de todo el mundo civilizado. (159)

(Those unfortunate beings, who were sold publicly in the markets of the marina of the Capital and other points of the Island, brought to the bosom of the family the most degrading corruption. Prostitution, concubinage, and the degradation of work were the immediate fruits of that inequity, which, to the honor of Spain, the *Cortes* [the central government of Spain] abolished, to the applause of the whole civilized world.)

Alonso’s justification maps an ethical society under colonialism. These “unfortunate beings” enter the colony from the outside, and simultaneously enter a market economy. It is their entrance as commodities, then, that renders them “desgraciados” (“unfortunate,” “deserving of

pity,” but also “without grace,” that is, outside of the community of the blessed). This appropriation of potential labor by the market, this rendering of the laborer him- or herself as commodity, thus structures Puerto Rican society as one in which labor itself is “envilecido” (from *envilecer*, “to revile,” but also “to debase”). Such rhetoric serves, in Stephanie Smallwood’s discussion of abolitionist rhetoric in the revolutionary United States, to “whittl[e] ‘freedom’ down (from all the liberties it might embody) to the ability to whittle things (and people) down (from all that they might be) to their own-able characteristics” (297). This produces a state of what Smallwood calls “commodified freedom,” in which what is sought by abolitionists is limited to the “freedom” of potential labor in a market society.

In Alonso’s eyes, the threat that the body-as-commodity (as opposed to labor-as-commodity) posed to Puerto Rican morals comes from the outside and is dispersed throughout the island via ports of entry, both legal and illicit.²⁴ This is particularly interesting, as the slave trade had been officially banned on multiple occasions. Throughout the 1830s, the trade actually increased to the Caribbean colonies, in spite of prior treaties to end it in 1817 and 1835 (Schmidt-Nowara, *Slavery* 120-55). Another treaty, signed with Britain in 1845, had banned the slave trade in Puerto Rico only a few years before the first edition of Alonso’s text. But since Alonso’s optic in “1833-1883” falls on the social changes during that period, it may be worth noting that the slave population, between 1834 and 1869, dropped by almost 3,000 (41,818 down to 39,069), while the group denominated free colored almost doubled in size, from 126,399 in 1834, to 237,710 in 1869 (Wagenheim 151). (Whites during this period also increased from 188,869 to 323,454 [Wagenheim 151].) Within four years, by 1873, slaves would be even fewer, with only around 29,000 counted (Dietz 36). At no point, however, did the slave population

²⁴ In fact, up until at least 1765, legal trade with Puerto Rico was so curtailed and unreliable that to make ends meet, illegal trade was more important to its development than legal trade. Such trade was often conducted through ports other than San Juan, which was the only port officially allowed to trade until 1804 (Dietz 9-10).

exceed twelve percent of the total population in Puerto Rico (Dietz 36). On the other hand, in 1834, the number of inhabitants who were non-white, both enslaved and free, exceeded the white population, and by 1869 they were 46% of the total population. If Alonso fears immorality entering through the nation's ports, it seems this issue may derive more from the fear of "free" populations, as these are the categories that increased the most (both absolutely and proportionally) during the nineteenth century. Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim even suggests that the *Cédula de Gracias* of 1815, which lowered the entrance requirements that immigrants were expected to meet, might have brought thousands of free blacks and mulattos from the wider Caribbean prior to the 1840s (Wagenheim 150). The fear of immorality entering through ports across the colony, then, appears to be linked as much or more to racism and nativism than abolitionism, as the population growth in the fifty years under question was mostly in the form of free immigration, both white and non-white, rather than in enslaved populations.

Likewise, this moral contagion penetrates the sphere of the family as much as the geographical space of the nation. Slaves, Alonso claims, "brought to the bosom of the family the most degrading corruption" (159). Alonso, who was trained as a doctor (Rivera 24-27), here diagnoses the malady of the Puerto Rican family as a pathogen that the slaves themselves—"Those unfortunate beings"—carry into the family. If slavery itself was moral illness for the national body, the slaves themselves are its vectors into the private sphere.²⁵ As the morals of the family are mapped as a physical body, prone to infection by the African slave, so, too, is the national body mapped as a marketplace in which the laborer becomes the healthy organ and the slave a type of pathology. Puerto Rico, then, in this cartography, is bound by the markets—legal

²⁵ The gendered aspect of Alonso's focus should not be discounted, as the first two of slavery's three greatest maladies ("prostitution, concubinage, and the degradation of work") explicitly depict a feminized black population. Cynthia Steele has suggested to me the possibility of Alonso's also being concerned with the intimacy of black wetnurses for white families, suggested metaphorically in the illness in the "bosom [*seno*] of the family."

and illegal—that are open at the ports-of-entry and are constituted by the non-slave labor that the colonial government had attempted throughout the nineteenth century to render as wage-labor, in order to manage a hitherto unarticulated workforce.²⁶

In fact, Alonso's educational theory can be seen as an attempt to liberalize the labor of Puerto Ricans; this was the interpretation of his twentieth-century commentator Rivera. Discussing the *escena* "Un desengaño" ("A Disillusionment"), Rivera notes how Alonso opposed "que los padres impongan a sus hijos los oficios y profesiones que éstos han de seguir" ("that parents should impose on their children the trades and professions that they must follow") (123). Instead, he counseled allowing the student to follow "su inclinación natural" ("their natural inclination") (123). To do so, Rivera suggests, is to ignore outside forces and respond, instead, to that "misteriosa voz, que, viniendo de lo hondo del alma, le anuncia. . . el sitio y la tarea que le están señalados en el orden del mundo" ("mysterious voice, that, coming from the depths of the soul, announces to them the position and tasks to which they are called in the order of the world") (123). The fear of heteronomous action is palpable in this interpretation, as is an underlying theory of the self-organization of society (Cheah, *Spectral Nationality* 90-91). This organization, however, is likewise premised on the schoolteacher as a father who will guide (but not determine) the students' course. As Lloyd and Thomas claim of the instructor in nineteenth-century British education, "the teacher self-consciously assumes the place of the *pater familias* (*in loco parentis*)" (20).

Alonso's text, which models the cultural homogeneity that he desires, serves as a text-teacher, itself an aspirational model for the ethical development of the reader. This is plain in Salvador Brau's preface to the second edition of *El jíbaro*. Brau, a prominent historian in Puerto

²⁶ These attempts were manifold, occasionally contradictory, and of limited success for many years. See Dietz 34-69.

Rico during the colonial transition period in the late 1800's, apologizes for writing a preface to a work and an author already so well known, by proposing a mental trip back in time to the moment of *El jíbaro*'s first release. By imagining ourselves surrounded with "el crugido del látigo que azotaba las carnes del esclavo" ("the crack of the whip that lashed the flesh of the slaves"), the lack of "sociedades instructivas y bibliotecas públicas" and the "prensa periódica" ("instructive societies and public libraries" and the "periodical press"), and of the isolation by the Atlantic Ocean from "todo comercio intelectual con el mundo civilizado" ("all intellectual commerce with the civilized world"), Brau claims, the reader of 1883 will begin to appreciate "en su genuino valer la fuerza de voluntad y las condiciones morales de aquéllos que. . . consagraban culto de adoración a las letras" ("in its real value the force of will and the moral conditions of those that consecrated the adoration of letters") (v-vi). *El jíbaro*, then, by means of overcoming the dehumanizing crack of the whips and the distance of Puerto Rico from the metropole (perhaps through the text's deafness to slavery in the 1849 edition), gains in moral value through its ability to incarnate the people: "en todos los tiempos y en todos los países," Brau claims, "la poesía ha sido como un vagido del pueblo" ("in all times and all countries," "poetry has been the cry of the new-formed people") (vi). In other words, poetry (among which is included, it seems, Alonso's multi-genre work) marks the birth of a people just as the cry ("vagido") marks the birth of the newborn. Poetry, in Brau's eyes, is thus the birth of a people, their inner-life expressed on the page, with the text "deployed as a device permitting the immediate registration of 'life' on its norm-charged surfaces" (Hunter 128).

The people that is born in Alonso's text, however, is one whitened of their history of slavery and racial mixture. The Puerto Rican people-as-family is registered in "1833-1883" at its most intimate point ("al seno"), where slavery infects it through the image of sexual

licentiousness. Of the three “immediate fruits” of slavery, two are specifically sexual in nature: prostitution and concubinage (159). Just as the “degradation” of labor suggests the reduction of all possible freedoms to the ability to sell one’s labor, so do these particular concerns suggest the political problems attendant on racial mixing. Here the risk of unsanctioned sexual relations is seen as the result of racial comingling and the entrance of foreign bodies into the organism of Puerto Rican society. The moral victory of abolition, then, is as much the attempt to attenuate the risk of racial mixing and to keep the family safe from it.

The belief in sexual immorality as an effect of slavery was shared by Alonso’s contemporaries in Puerto Rican letters, as Ileana M. Rodríguez Silva has demonstrated. She points to Salvador Brau’s laying blame on the institutions of slavery for allowing “the wide spread practice of concubinage among the peasantry” (79). The licentiousness that was fostered by slavery, though, takes a more general character within Puerto Rican society, in the imaginations of these late-empire liberals. In both Alonso and Brau’s formulations, as discussed here, the generality of concubinage, though a result of slavery, does not seem to be linked directly to race. In texts such as Manuel Zeno Gandía’s *La charca* (which I will discuss more in Chapter Four), sexual immorality is evidenced not by interracial sexual relations but by incest. Rodríguez Silva, however, suggests that the fear of incest and generalized concubinage could be “a channel to express publicly the profound anxieties about sexuality and reproduction, especially interracial unions. Control over women’s sexuality was a means to contain the reproduction of blackness” (81). Discussing the sexual immorality of the *jíbaro* or the urban lower classes, then, “became the elites’ preferred way to recreate a racialized order, and to do so without explicitly disclosing its racialized nature” (86).

What I mean to suggest by all of this is the impossibility of organizing the Puerto Rican nation into a homogenous image, in the light of a history of racial slavery. While Alonso attempts, through his moral retrospective, to expel African slavery from the image of Puerto Rico that he represents in the second volume of *El jíbaro* in 1883, it lingers in his rhetoric of nationalism. It lingers as both the commodification of labor that spreads throughout Puerto Rican society following the waging of (white, or *jíbaro*) labor and the linking of patriarchal discourse with the segregation of sexuality along racial lines. Puerto Rico, then, is impossible for Alonso to represent as a homogenous image of the nation, that is, of the nation as organism. The educational apparatus that Lloyd and Thomas see as securing the state, through the introduction of culture as the medium of national *Bildung*—of “representing representation” (20)—goes awry in the colony, where social divisions injected by the history of the colonial state obscure the relationship of models to becoming-subjects. The “school of customs,” therefore, cultivates particularities that are unorganizable within the bounds of the state as the form of representation. Rivera claims that Alonso tries to link together “la raza, las costumbres, el idioma, la tradición, la religión y la historia” through “la lengua como el resumen y expresión de todas esas fuerzas” (“race, customs, language, tradition, religion, and history” through “language as the sum and expression of all those forces”) (131). As a result, *El jíbaro* condemns “los extranjerismos y las crecientes impurezas del idioma” (“foreign expression and the increasing impurities of language”) while recognizing that education is better outside of Spain (131). Such a “language community,” as Etienne Balibar might call it—which “connects individuals up with an origin which may at any moment be actualized and which has as its content the *common act* of their own exchanges” (“The Nation” 97, italics in original)—is nonetheless fragmented by Alonso’s text. Oscillating between the standard Castilian common to Puerto Rican and Peninsular letters

and the idiomatic *jíbaro* pronunciation of his dialect poetry, Alonso serves to separate the colony from the metropole by its shared language. In Puerto Rico, the lived reality of Spanish empire is produced as a set of fragments of cultural particularity that Alonso seeks to marshal in support of his patriotic vision, but which ultimately breaks apart on the shores of colonial racialization and historical divergence. The production of “Puerto Rican culture” in Alonso, then, ruptures precisely on the distinction between “Culture” as model and ideal and “culture” as the medium of identification with a particular.

Conclusion

Alonso’s *El jíbaro* emblemizes the assimilationist project that sought to suture the individual to society, and colony to metropole, through culture. In so doing, culture’s separation from socio-economic materiality allows the particularity of the Puerto Rican nation to grow within the imperial Spanish field of power. As Ramón Soto-Crespo has noted in *Mainland Passage*, “nationalism” in Puerto Rico is not a singular discourse, but a bifurcated one that separates “political nationalism” from “cultural nationalism” (xiv). While the former has sought political independence as the expression of the experience of the nation, the latter “does not depend on political sovereignty. In other words, nationhood can exist at the level of culture without proceeding to a nation-state” (xiv). This bifurcation is one particular manifestation of the broader problematic of what Soto-Crespo calls a “borderland theory” that sees “Puerto Ricanness” as “best represented in those artifacts that defy sense and escape the logic underlying cultural conventions” (8). His celebration of a fragmentary and disjointed nationalism draws into its orbit thinkers as diverse as pathbreaking historian Antonio Pedreira; the architect of the Estado Libre Asociado (the status that Puerto Rico currently retains in relation to the United

States of America), Luis Muñoz Marín; and the contemporary novelist Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá. It is noteworthy that the majority of Soto-Crespo's examples (including the three major ones mentioned here) are generally identified as (white) straight men. One is already in trouble when they try to examine "artifacts that defy sense and escape the logic underlying cultural conventions" by focusing on the productions of the social stratum that determines these very dominant conventions.²⁷ The use of such problematic thinkers as Pedreira and Muñoz Marín leads one reviewer to write that *Mainland Passage* "is not a straight 'colonial apology.' It does, however, read like something very close" (Lugo-Lugo 319). By reveling in the cultural, I would argue, Soto-Crespo does not account for the *production* of the cultural sphere as separate within the liberal experiment of the late Spanish empire. Soto-Crespo thus reiterates the liberalism of imperial formations that assumed a separation between the socio-economic matrix and the cultural manifestations that, in fact, dialectically worked on each other. Without acknowledging the role that "culture" came to fill in liberal discourses of the nation (i.e. as a replacement for the unrepresentable problems of race), Soto-Crespo is trapped in binary logics of empire.

The investment of Soto-Crespo and Alonso before him in a cultural Puerto Ricanness perhaps reveals its ideological nature. As Pierre Bourdieu has commented, while the dominant culture serves the social stratum in power as a means of communication among its members, it serves other purposes as well, namely the production of "false consciousness" in the dominated strata and "the legitimation of the established order by establishing distinctions (hierarchies) and legitimating these distinctions" (167). It is in the realm of the "cultural" that distinctions between social strata are created and legitimated, as in Alonso's treatment of dance culture in the island.

²⁷ For an alternative version of Pedreira and Muñoz Marín as elite architects of cultural conventions after the United States's invasion, see Guerra, 67-121. Rodríguez Juliá's case is more complicated, as many of his works attempt to deconstruct his own privilege; see, e.g. the bilingual edition of Rodríguez Juliá, *Cortijo's Wake/El entierro de Cortijo*.

The symbolic power exerted as hegemony within the colony in the Spanish era and which extends to the present day in the suppression of blackness (and queerness, and woman-ness) from hegemonic Puerto Rican identities is manipulated and established through the dissemination of “culture” as a means of belonging.²⁸ By establishing culture as the primary organizer of the Puerto Rican nation in the face of an intransigent and imperial state, Alonso sought to make the subject’s social becoming an organ of hegemony. The role that this played in Puerto Rico’s transition to the United States empire will be discussed in Chapter Four. For now, I turn to the temporalization of the subject within the Spanish empire, as evidenced by *costumbrista* writings about the Philippines.

²⁸ For contemporary undoings of hegemonic “Puerto Ricanness,” particularly as regards its whiteness and heteronormativity, see the fiction of Mayra Santos-Febres, such as her novel *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (translated in English as *Sirena Selena*) or her collection of short stories *Pez de vidrio*.

Chapter Three: Spatio-Temporalities of Literary Value: Spain and the Philippines, 1876-1906

Introduction

In 1891, Emilia Pardo Bazán, by then already one of the most modern prose-stylists in nineteenth-century Spain, wrote a highly positive review of a book by Pablo Feced published in 1888. Feced, who, under the pseudonym Quiquiap, was an advocate of the continued presence of the monastic orders in the Philippines as implementers of government decree,¹ had written a book of essays depicting the customs and habits of the Filipinos among whom he had worked and lived in the Spanish Philippines. The book, *Filipinas: Esbozos y pinceladas* (*The Philippines: Sketches and Brushstrokes*), draws in almost equal measure on racial science as it was understood popularly in Spanish culture and *costumbrista* fiction.² The Philippines that Feced describes is one, Pardo Bazán explains, of a climatological disease in which the indigenous peoples are reduced by nature to infancy (80). The great Spanish novelist also says that to represent “tierras lejanas” (“distant countries”) adequately, one must have “una larga residencia, familiaridad con sus habitantes” and a “conocimiento minucioso” (“a long residence in the country, familiarity with its inhabitants” and a “detailed knowledge”) of its language and customs (76). While she claims to pay attention to the debates that circulated between the

¹ For contemporaneous opposing views on the role of the monastic orders in the Philippines, see Pilar and Retana, *Frailes*. John Schumacher’s *Growth and Decline* provides a contemporary overview of the role of the Catholic Church—including both regular and secular clergy—in Philippine history.

² For a brief discussion of how Feced’s discourse drew on racial science, see Luis Ángel Sánchez Gómez, “Ellos y nosotros.”

Spanish *letrado* Vicente Barrantes and the Austrian anthropologist Ferdinand Blumentritt, Pardo Bazán's residence solely in the Iberian Peninsula disqualifies her, she claims, from the ability to judge the accuracy of representation in Feced's stories (77).

As a result, she relies on Feced's ability to "evocar de ese país [las Filipinas] una imagen pintoresca y viva" ("evoke the Philippines in a lively and painterly image") (79). The "lively and painterly" quality of Feced's writing therefore substitutes for the possibility of "knowing" *las Filipinas* in any more "true" way. Ontology is, thus, a fiction of representation, where knowledge can be conjured into existence through artistry. It may not be possible to ascertain a detailed knowledge of that which is not experienced, Pardo Bazán states near the beginning, for representations reflect reality as in a convex mirror (76). Guarding against what could result in an abyss of representation, however, Pardo Bazán finds recourse in Feced's observation that "[h]ay á veces fotografías sin acabado parecido, pero ni una siquiera sin un fondo general de verdad" ("there are, at times, photographs without close resemblance, but not a one without a general basis in truth") (qtd. in Pardo Bazán 81). Representation, then, for Pardo Bazán, may itself not *appear* to be like that which it represents, as long as "appearance" is understood, in this case, to be a collection of superficial (upon-the-face) qualities which are experienced *with* but which are not essential *to* the form of the thing represented. Representation is a question, for Pardo Bazán, of refracting the true basis, or background fund (*fondo*),³ of an object, even if such a representation requires the interpretation of the experiencer in order to reveal its "general basis in truth."

³ *Fondo* can be translated as "base," "basis," "fund," or "background," depending on context. In Chapter Four, below, I discuss the *fondo* in more detail as an ideological belief in the existence of a material reality outside of the contingency of representation, as well as the conflicts to which such a belief gives rise in market economies.

Intriguingly, the Tagalog derivative—*pundo*—retains all of these meanings. The role that this idea plays in the structure of the aesthetic-imperial regime should not be underestimated.

If representation is, for Pardo Bazán, a subjective act upon an object (an object which is further removed by the transmission of the representation in text between writer and reader), then the pleasure she derives from Feced's "sketches" suggests a particular view of what makes a text valuable. Pardo Bazán can judge Feced's sketches to be of value because his text plays on the distinction between representations and represented. Though the represented object may not appear to us in the same form in which it is experienced, the form at the base can nonetheless be communicated through a dissimilar (refracted) appearance. The value of a text is determined not by its ability to convey the detailed knowledge its author has of the country, but by the text's evoking these details in a "painterly" and "lively" manner. Pardo Bazán thus establishes as the basis of (literary) value a disequilibrium within the representation of the object.

As Courtney Johnson has noted, while "Pardo Bazán was not a *filipinóloga* she certainly had the credentials to comment on the literary pleasure to be found in Feced's book of sketches for an urbane metropolitan reader" (246). Johnson then focuses on how Pardo Bazán's review, while explicitly discussing the debate between Barrantes and Blumentritt, does not mention a single writer of *indio filipino* origin.⁴ This is despite the fact that, by 1891, José Rizal had produced many of his important works—including the novel *Noli me tângere*—and Marcelo H. del Pilar (pseudonym Plaridel) had been publishing the organ of Philippine propaganda *La solidaridad* for two years, first in Barcelona and then in Madrid. Johnson's critique rests on the fact that Pardo Bazán can and does base her review solely on the abstracted qualities of what he calls "literary pleasure." In the process, Pardo Bazán erases the political aspect of a debate that

⁴ The terms here are contentious. "*Indio*" has been stigmatized as a racist and imperial imposition on the populations of the Philippines, and not inaccurately. However, since it was the most common and generically used term in the nineteenth century for the Christianized population of the archipelago that were not descended from the Spanish or originally from Spain, I use it historically. It has also been argued that José Rizal's reclaiming of the term in naming a group of Christianized Filipinos living in Spain "los indios bravos" (translatable as "The Indian Braves," "The Courageous Indians," or "The Brave Indians") reversed the political polarity of the term (Jesus xiv).

she nonetheless chose to enter by engaging the European writers Feced, Barrantes, and Blumentritt. Her depoliticized evaluation of Feced's work, based on a particular concept of representation and its role in the literary, is thus an attempt, according to Johnson, to neutralize politics in the field of literature.

But this, in turn, raises questions unanswered by Johnson, namely what is the "literary pleasure" that Pardo Bazán derives from this collection of *costumbrista* sketches? Additionally, who are the subjects who produce this pleasure and who are the subjects who enjoy it? *Costumbrismo*, as a style of writing apotheosized in the Iberian Peninsula with don Ramón de Mesonero Romanos and Mariano José de Larra in the 1820s and 30s, was a single thread in the literary culture of the end of the century, and not a dominant one. Pardo Bazán herself is famous—along with her close friend, Benito Pérez Galdós—for developing an autochthonous naturalism in Spanish letters that had succeeded *costumbrismo* as literary fashion (more on Galdós in the following chapter). Why, then, does she so passionately praise a collection of essays whose literary style had been rendered obsolete by her own writings and to whom is this recommendation directed?

A part of the answer may lie in the consistent manner in which the Philippines was represented in literary culture in the Spanish empire during the nineteenth century. Particularly in the 1870s and 1880s, when interest in the Philippines grew as a result of changes in the economic policy of the islands, *costumbrista* writing about the Philippines flourished.⁵ In addition to Feced's writings, collections of short stories by José Montero y Vidal (famous for his *Historia general de Filipinas* [*General History of the Philippines*]) and W.E. Retana (the foremost Spanish bibliographer of the Philippines) written in *costumbrista* style appeared and were later

⁵ For an overview of *costumbrista* fiction published in the Philippines by Spaniards from the Iberian Peninsula, see Lilia Hernandez-Chung (57-93).

reprinted due to popularity. At the time, these were likely the most “literary” (i.e. “painterly,” “lively,” evocative) of texts available in Spain about the Philippines, which suggests that Pardo Bazán, if she wished to read about the largest Spanish colony in the Pacific, would be limited to historical work, governmental edicts, and *costumbrismo*.

But why should *costumbrismo*—at this late period outdated by Pardo Bazán’s own literary endeavors in the Spanish Peninsula—be the primary manner of representing the Spanish colony of *las Filipinas* in literature? And why, presented in this style, should they merit a lengthy and laudatory review from such a prominent writer? In order to answer these questions, this chapter will develop a spatio-temporal map of the distribution of literary valuation in the Spanish Empire. Drawing on the writings of Montero y Vidal and Retana, I will demonstrate how the very centrality of Pardo Bazán’s naturalism in Peninsular literary culture at this time can be seen as the result of an uneven cultivation of aesthetic subjectivity across the globe. Aesthetics, as derived from Kant, has tended to presume that a universal assent to the beautiful is premised on a shared capacity for judgment. As I discussed in Chapter One, however, the very universality of this capacity is premised on the boundedness of a given community, imagined within the capitalist world-system of the nineteenth century as the nation. By prompting this national sentiment, aesthetics provoked the sense of national belonging that could lead to revolution. Theories of aesthetics that depend on the universal validity of aesthetic judgment among all subjects—a universality that Pardo Bazán’s distinction between experience and representation both foregrounds and obscures as in a convex mirror—require always the political as a supplement that persists outside of the domain of aesthetics itself. To the extent, then, that such theories do not incorporate the rendering aesthetic of subjectivities in imperial relations—that is, subjectivities that are only *contingently* related to the “general basis [*fondo general*]” of material

reality of human existence—the production of literary value as a result of global capitalist expansion remains unexplained and inexplicable. Current theories of world literature have thus failed to provide us with a means of articulating patterns of capitalist economies with patterns of literary development. Thus, to approach “world literature,” its origins in the distribution of both aesthetic value and aesthetic valuation must first be uncovered, as must the way that imperial relations have organized the field of literary studies through the distribution of aesthetic subjectivities.

A Brief History of *Costumbrismo*

Given the centrality of the *costumbrista* genre as a temporally- and geographically-distributed category to the discussion of value judgments that I will lay out below, a brief definition and description of its origins and development is necessary. In José Montesinos’ classic account of *costumbrismo*, the defining feature that he provides for it is that it “*tipifica* casos y personas, mientras que la ficción los *singulariza*—aun allí donde les conserva un *minimum* de tipicidad para hacerlos reconocibles como exponentes de algo, profesión, clase, etc.” (“*typifies* cases and persons, while the fiction *singularizes* them—even as a *minimum* of typicality is conserved there in order to make them recognizable as exponents of something, a profession, a class, etc.”) (34, italics in original).⁶ In other words, there is no specific narrative trajectory, philosophical idea, or even subject matter necessary for a *cuadro de costumbres* (“portrait of customs”) to be recognizable as such. What is necessary is that it makes of its representations typical cases. Montesinos thus distinguishes between *costumbrismo* and the French *roman des mœurs* (moral novels) by arguing that, unlike the interiorizing reach of the *roman des mœurs*, *costumbrismo* retains a “*superficialidad moral*” (“*moral superficiality*”) (49,

⁶ Use of English vocabulary and non-standard orthography are preserved from the original text.

italics in original). Montesinos' influential (if, perhaps, a bit cynical) assessment is that *costumbrismo* simplifies a reality just beyond its own grasp, a reality which it does not participate in constructing but which it can only reflect.⁷

Such reflection, therefore, has less to do with a critique of society than with a description of it in its particulars. Montesinos links this development in Spanish literature to the rise of what he calls “el *fisiologismo francés*” (“French *physiologism*”) (48, italics in original), the categorization of society into a set of physiologic capabilities and disabilities. The *costumbres* depicted in a given *cuadro*, then, inscribe a natural form (*phýsis*) under the light of what Montesinos calls an “abstracción moral de la que debe ser un ejemplo” (“moral abstraction of what should be an example”), with the result that “la moral irrealiza tipos y caracteres” (“the moral renders unreal types and characters”) (62). *Costumbrismo* reflects a reality that it distorts, a reality which is perennially falling away from its own representation in the *cuadro*.

This falling away is as much temporal in Montesinos' account as ontological. Montesinos highlights the task—self-reported—of the *costumbristas* as one of marking transitions:

cada vez que vemos aparecer un costumbrista consciente de su obra, oiremos de su boca la afirmación del mismo propósito: dar fe de un cambio, de una revolución, de una evolución que ha transformado la faz de todo el país o *de alguno de sus rincones pintorescos*, y desahogar, entregándose al recuerdo, la nostalgia de todo lo desaparecido y olvidado. (44, italics added)

(each time that we see the appearance of a *costumbrista* conscious of their work, we hear from their mouth the affirmation of the same intention: to bear witness to a change, a revolution, an evolution that has transformed the face of the whole

⁷ For a contemporary take on the role of “custom” and the social groupings it delineated within late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century prose fiction, see Leigh Mercer (1-14).

country or of one of its picturesque corners, and to provoke, by submitting itself to memory, nostalgia for everything that has disappeared or been forgotten.)

Superficial to its core, Montesinos highlights *costumbrismo*'s distinction between the surface (*faz*) and the inner turmoil that conditions it. The appearance of singularity thus betrays a writhing mass of particularities that *costumbrismo* tries to contain through recourse to nostalgia.

Recently, Franco Moretti has argued that the rise of descriptive prose in the nineteenth century was an ideological tool. Noting that this prose “became analytical, impersonal, perhaps even ‘impartial,’ as [Walter] Scott once put it,” Moretti argues that “the parallel with conservatism suggests that—though this or that individual description may indeed have been relatively neutral—description *as a form* was not neutral at all: its effect was to inscribe the present so deeply into the past that alternatives became simply unimaginable” (*The Bourgeois* 93, italics in original). Moretti’s account suggests the attraction to *costumbrismo* in nineteenth-century Spain as a description machine that locked the vanishing present into its disappearance.

It is therefore telling of a certain type of politics that Montesinos’s formulation above makes no distinction between the “country” (*país*) and its “picturesque corners” (*rincones pintorescos*). As Susan Kirkpatrick has suggested, the equation between these two was the specific project of *costumbristas* such as Mesonero Romanos. Noting that the Spanish nation was a “site of struggle between the political ideologies of reactionaries and progressives” in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Kirkpatrick argues that the “nation, in effect, forms a determining coordinate that will unify his [Mesonero Romanos’s] fragmentary images of society” (32). The physiology of the nation was the core problem of *costumbrismo* precisely because the nation’s contours as an organic unity were open to dispute.⁸

⁸ On the organismic metaphor of the nation, see Cheah, *Spectral* (19-59).

The unification of “fragmentary images of society” recalls the development of the nation as “imagined community” in Benedict Anderson’s formulation. Anderson claims that, with the explosion of print culture from the eighteenth century on, the perception of distinct places tied through linguistic and economic bonds to one another as singularly similar comes to dominate the perception of space and time (*Imagined* 22-36). Interestingly, Anderson locates the “creole states” of the Americas as the initial developers of the nation form (*Imagined* 47).⁹ While *costumbrismo* does not figure into Anderson’s discussion here (it does, however, play a counterintuitive role in his later *Under Three Flags*, which I will discuss below), such a linkage seems sustained by Salvador Bueno’s assessment of the anti-colonial possibilities of *costumbrismo* in Cuba, which I discussed in Chapter Two.

Despite its primary distinction appearing to be its social role in suturing the “picturesque corners” of the nation, *costumbrismo* might still count as a genre in Wai Chee Dimock’s reformulation of “genre” as “family resemblance.” This is because Dimock’s definition is capacious enough to overlap and blur generic distinctions to the point where one cannot know “where any particular genre might spiral out, what offshoots might spin off from it” (90). What distinguishes genre, then, is a literary history that reconstructs divergences retrospectively into a whole. However, *costumbrismo* might be better understood, not as a genre—whereby the form of the text is guided by formal concerns that exceed it (prose vs. verse, presence of narrative vs. absence of narrative, or what have you) and which are reconstructed *ex post facto*—but as representational commonplace that invokes reality as a synchronic image of a diachronically conceived “real,” that is, a real that is always about to be overcome. Ultimately, *costumbrismo* is more determined by its positing of a real *outside the text* than by any formal features of the text

⁹ There has been a long-standing discussion of how accurate Anderson’s history is on this score. A particularly rigorous treatment of this is the collection edited by Sara Castro-Klarén and John C. Chasteen.

itself. As a result, Feced's text reviewed by Pardo Bazán comes to be *the* mode of interpreting a homogenized national image of "Spanishness" that will be, even though such an image was still far from reality among the myriad cultures and customs of the Empire.¹⁰

The reality posited here also assumes, therefore, and in a contradictory fashion, the privileging of certain realities over others, of cultures as hierarchically ordered. Anderson provides an unintentionally helpful guide to this limit of *costumbrismo*, whose exposition is crucial for our understanding of the racialized link between the national and the literary. When Anderson discusses an early scholastic endeavor of the Filipino *indio* writer, Isabelo de los Reyes, *El folk-lore filipino* (1887, the same year that Rizal's *Noli me tângere* appeared), he notes that Reyes "sharply distinguished himself from amateur *costumbristas*" through "the importance of comparisons" (*Under* 14). The comparative method, in Anderson's account, reduces compared customs to equal value, leveling the distinction between superstitions of the Iberian Peninsula and the Philippine Archipelago. Reyes thus provides a glimpse of "the real history of the archipelago and its *pueblo/pueblos*" that "stretched far further back in time [than the Spanish conquest], and thus could not be framed by coloniality" (14). Such a history—imagined through the effacing of the privilege accorded to the history of the colonial period over that of the pre-colonial—also helped produce "the Philippines" as a racialized, eternal nation through its tracing of superstitions to a time before the colonial era.¹¹

Such a comparative function in colonial *costumbrismo* also underlies Diana Isabel Santiago's estimate of the role of *costumbrismo* in the intellectual culture of Puerto Rico. When non-governmental papers reappeared after most private presses had been shuttered between 1823

¹⁰ A particularly illuminating account of the diversity of Spanish "naciones" ("nations," plural) from the perspective of a post-colonial subject is in Domingo Sarmiento's *Viajes* (164-71). Cf. Mary Louise Pratt's discussion of Sarmiento's text (189-93).

¹¹ On the raciology of this eternalization, see Étienne Balibar.

and 1839, they tended to publish more conservative articles to pass censorship, including an increase in the number of reprinted *cuadros de costumbres* from the peninsula (Santiago 71). As a result, a series of “costumbres de Madrid” (“customs of Madrid”) appeared in *El boletín instructivo y mercantil de Puerto Rico* (*The Instructional and Mercantile Bulletin of Puerto Rico*) in 1841, which satirized the high volume of crime in the big cities of the Peninsula (72). The importation of peninsular Spanish articles suggests the desire for this type of discourse, while the depiction of criminality also points to a possible anti-colonial edge. Depicting the metropole as ridden by crises and vice, the very choice of articles for reprinting in the colony suggested the bankruptcy of Spain’s claims to be able to govern by exposing its inability to do so even at home. Thus *costumbrismo* imported from the metropole can be seen as critiquing the imperial structure that maintained their relationship by refracting the cultural particularity of metropolitan society to an audience of its supposed subject populations.

The danger thus posed by *costumbrismo* is its ability to provide a particular kind of knowledgeable subject, a subject aware of itself as related to but distinct from the norms of subjectivity that animate Kant’s discussion of judgment (see Chapter One, above). By aestheticizing customs and reflecting them out to multiple audiences (in the metropole, the colony, and, potentially, elsewhere), colonial *costumbristas* produced an image of society over which they had little control, with possible audiences being left with the chance to mock, to admire, or to despise the images created (Blanco, *Frontier* 157-83). These images, however, were also cultivated as a means of delineating who could and could not take interest in the colonial economy, that is, who could accumulate and consume capital and who would be limited to productive roles. It is the accumulation of this valuative position that will occupy the remainder of this chapter.

Custom and Capital

The Spanish Peninsular authors that I examine below offer a theory of how literature produces the subject positions necessary for the development of an aesthetic-imperial regime through a spatialization of literary modernity. The first author, José Montero y Vidal, originally published the collection *Cuentos filipinos* (*Philippine Stories*) in 1876. This collection was so favorably received that the initial print-run was followed by a second in 1883. A second printing within seven years indicates some success, as Montero y Vidal himself mentions in a prologue to the second edition, noting that “la prensa de todos los matices tributó lisonjeros elogios á esta obrita” (“media of every stripe gave flattering elegies to this humble work”) while “[e]l público se apresuró en España á adquirir nuestro modesto libro, pero en Filipinas fué aún mayor el éxito que obtuvo, habiéndose agotado, tiempo hace, los 4.000 ejemplares de que constaba la edicion que en aquella época hicimos” (“the public in Spain hastened to get hold of our modest book, but in the Philippines, the success it received was even greater, as all four thousand copies of that edition were sold out quite a while ago” (Montero y Vidal 1/xv). While humbling his own work, Montero y Vidal lauds its popularity, attributing to “Spain” a distinct appreciation from that in “the Philippines.” In fact, in the Philippines, *Cuentos filipinos* is more popular than in Spain, suggesting that whatever the book is offering to readers in the Pacific archipelago is more valuable than what it offers to those in the European peninsula.

The success of this book in Spain is initially puzzling to the contemporary literary historian, however, as the *costumbrista* style of the stories was already, as discussed above,

decadent in the Spanish metropole.¹² Montero y Vidal is happy to provide an explanation for its popularity, however, which has little to do with its style.¹³ Instead, he claims that the cessation of the Tobacco Monopoly—a monopoly held by the Spanish government over all production of tobacco in the Archipelago until the latter part of the nineteenth century¹⁴—caused “miles de personas interesadas en tan pingüe negocio” (“thousands of individuals interested in such a profitable business”) to fix their attention on the Philippines, “un país de que tan escasas y en general erróneas noticias se tienen en Europa” (“a country about which, in Europe, there is such scarce and generally erroneous information”) (1-2/xv).¹⁵ In other words, the stories collected under the title *Cuentos filipinos* can be used as a source of “accurate” information on the Philippine islands, information that can then be monetarily capitalized through the liberalization of the market in tobacco, sugar, abaca, etc.

Montero y Vidal’s concern here is with the possibility of representing reality in a manner accurate enough for practical instrumentalization. The technology of *costumbrismo* is meant to make the Philippines and its inhabitants present themselves as capable of being acted upon, as a “standing-reserve” of European action (Heidegger 19). In Montero y Vidal, colonial *costumbrismo* is not a rehearsal for “the advent of an authentic literary representation of an autochthonous . . . reality” (Blanco, *Frontier* 163), which opens the dangerous possibility of being used for revolutionary purposes. Rather, it is the enframing of “accurate” information to

¹² One of Galdós’ most famous novels, *Doña Perfecta*, which is reminiscent of Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1856), appeared the same year as the first edition of *Cuentos filipinos* (1876). Pardo Bazán appeared on the literary scene about the same time.

¹³ W. E. Retana, author of the other collection I will discuss, includes an entry for this collection in his 1906 bibliography of the Philippines (originally published in Spain). This entry includes the following commentary: “Escaso ambiente filipino; estilo adocenado” (“Scant Philippine ambience; decadent style”) (Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico* 2: 841). The full significance of this comment will become obvious when I discuss Retana’s commentary on his own collection of fiction, below.

¹⁴ For more information on the Tobacco Monopoly, see Ed. C. de Jesus.

¹⁵ The original Spanish “noticias” suggests “news-item,” and implies that Montero y Vidal was combating the racist journalistic culture of writers such as Feded and W.E. Retana. While the role of newspapers in constructing values (capital, truth, authenticity, autochthnicity, etc.) between the metropole and the colony would make a fascinating parallel to my study, I have not had time to pursue this research.

create value in an economy in which false information circulates and debases the underpinnings of empire, that is, knowledge of and therefore power over subjects and resources. Montero y Vidal's conception of value is thus premised on the immediacy of experience in representation, a far cry from Pardo Bazán's "pleasurable" distinction between the two. In Montero y Vidal's movement from the real to the represented—which, in its lack of change, suggests no movement at all—mastery is produced, a subjective intentionality imbues the object, in the process, producing value for the Peninsular subject. As a result, the proto-ethnographic details of *costumbrismo* can be used for the material benefit of Europeans. Literary style is thus the act of transvaluation of the raw material of knowledge into the (re)production of capital.

This distinction in imperial value Montero y Vidal narrates as the contrasting value of his stories for the indigenous subjects (*indios*) that he claims to represent. In the prologue to the first edition, reprinted in the second, Montero y Vidal claims that he wrote these stories for two reasons: "reanimar la afición de los indígenas filipinos á la lectura, dándoles á conocer, siquiera sea ligeramente, la historia de su país, y proporcionar á los peninsulares algunos datos acerca de las costumbres, organizacion, producciones, industria y comercio del archipiélago" ("to reawaken the zeal of the native Filipinos to read, providing them with knowledge, however meager, of the history of their country. . . [and] to provide the Peninsulars with some facts concerning the customs, organization, products, industries, and commerce of the archipelago") (3/xvi). We will come back to the curiosity of the desire to "reawaken" (literally, "reanimate") the love of reading in the *indios filipinos*, but for the moment let us examine how customs are being used here. Further on, Montero y Vidal suggests his work provides the *indios* with "libros que les den á conocer sus propias costumbres y analicen minuciosa y concienzudamente sus instintos, sus gustos, sus pasiones, es decir, su idiosincrasia" ("books that will acquaint them

with their own customs, that will make them conscientiously analyze in-depth their instincts, tastes, passions, that is to say, their idiosyncrasy”) (4/xvi-xvii). By offering *indios filipinos* a representation of themselves that will interest them, he argues, they will be encouraged to learn Spanish (4/xvi). This admission opens the possibility of the interiority of Philippine subjects being available to cultivation into Spanish valuative systems. If the mimetic effect of seeing themselves is meant to provoke interest in Montero y Vidal’s work among *indios filipinos*, it also renders the Philippine subject both an object for Spanish mastery and, dangerously, produces them as capable of being masters over themselves (Blanco, *Frontier* 9).

Strangely, while several of these stories may be accepted as analyses of Philippine customs, thus following through on this pedagogical concern, certain of them—such as “*El vago y el matandá*” (“The Newcomer and the Oldtimer”), the story I will analyze below—exclude *indios* almost entirely or use them as plot devices in an analysis of the *peninsular* and *criollo* residents in the colony.¹⁶ The stated goal of a self-reflexive analysis of habits and customs seems to have little to do with the large quantity of historical and economic detail that Montero y Vidal includes in his stories, for example in “*La sultana de Joló*” (“The Sultana of Jolo”) which details at length the history of Spanish conquests in the Philippines, as well as the principal exports of the port city of Iloilo. These seem to have much more to do with the European-oriented reason for the book’s existence explored above. Since in any given story these various purposes may be pursued sequentially or simultaneously, this suggests that the dual audiences imagined for these stories, audiences which *may* share a language (it is, in fact, Montero y Vidal’s pedagogical desire that they do so) but which are divided by distance, time, and the general illiteracy (in

¹⁶ *Peninsular* was the quasi-legal designation of Spaniards born in Spain who had emigrated to the colonies, either temporarily or permanently. *Criollo/a* was the designation for Spaniards born in the extra-European colonies, and indigenous or “Malay” Filipinos were most commonly called “*indios*,” see my Note Five, above.

Spanish) of the *indios filipinos*.¹⁷

Here, the two audiences explicitly imagined are not equally delineated. While the *indios filipinos* as an audience are marked by Montero y Vidal's assertion of their desire for their own reflection in the text, the other audience is only vaguely marked as "thousands of people" who are interested in pursuing newly opened market opportunities. Given the penetration of Euro-American capital in the Philippines,¹⁸ it is unclear how broadly Montero y Vidal imagines this second audience. Are these "thousands of people" Castilian-speaking Spaniards? The Spanish-literate British and American entrepreneurial class that dominated trade in the Philippine Archipelago? The *indios ilustrados* such as Rizal and Pilar who worked and lived in Europe? As my analysis of "El vago y el matandá," below, will show, the anxiety of *peninsulares* over their control of the market economy is crucial to the distribution of aesthetic subjectivities that these texts represent.

The projection of desire through the production of a mirror-image of the colonized suggests the emergent public sphere of the colonial Philippines, as John D. Blanco has examined it in *Frontier Constitutions*. Citing Mikhail Bakhtin's theory on diglossia in the novel, Blanco discusses how the novel in the Philippines surfaces as a new technology for seeking the consent of the native population for Spanish rule that was necessary to maintain the Spanish empire in the archipelago, following the eighteenth-century reforms of the Bourbon monarchy. This solicitation of native consent "never failed to raise its spectral double: What if the colonial subject did not consent or understood consent in a different way?" (Blanco 186-87).

While Montero y Vidal's stories coincide historically with the novelistic works that Blanco

¹⁷ This recalls Vince Rafael's argument in *The Promise of the Foreign*, in particular the "telecommunicative" power with which Castilian Spanish was invested by *mestizo* (and *indio*) elites in the Philippines (17-35). My concern in this section, however, is with how *peninsular* writers viewed and valued the role of Castilian Spanish in the Philippines and its relation to the development of the "literary" as a category of value.

¹⁸ See Benito Legarda, Jr. for an economic profile of the Philippines in the nineteenth century.

examines, they do not contain the self-reflexivity that Blanco sees as essential to the novel in the Philippines at this time. By this I mean that within these texts the characters do not examine their own or others' motivations, nor do they seem capable of so doing. They cannot question their own actions without revealing the double-standard of imperial liberalism that requires the mobility of cosmopolite peninsular subjects capable of knowing others and the immobility of archipelagic subjects only able to exhibit their own customs, and even that only through the mediation of peninsular knowledge. Instead, Montero y Vidal poses the problem of literary self-reflection in a space *outside* the narrative, beyond contestation, a pedagogical position of authority that gives the possibility of self-reflection as a gift. But contestations remain in these narratives, not over the *political* subjectivity of the *indios*, to be sure, but over their *economic* one. At their core, these stories internalize a debate over the *values* of empire rather than over its political possibility. The question Montero y Vidal asks through his gift of this "humble work" is: what do the colonizer and the colonized each and separately gain from imperial relations and how is this coordinated with the distribution of subjective judgment?

The answer he provides in the prologue to the first edition is misleadingly simple, i.e. through Spanish-language literature the natives will learn of themselves and discover who they are. They are to do this through the stimulation of their desire for the Spanish word provoked by their represented image within the Spanish-language text and thus "reawaken" their love of reading. Yet though the public instruction in Spanish for *indios* had been a specific goal of the Spanish regime for many years, it seems to have met with only partial success before the opening of a normal school for the training of native teachers in 1863 (Blanco 184). When the first edition of Montero y Vidal's collection was published, it had been scarcely a decade that instruction in Spanish had been regularized. Despite the shortage of Spanish-speaking *indios*,

however, Montero y Vidal believes that *indios* are reading. In his short story “El estudiante de la Laguna” (“The Student from La Laguna”)—another text with lengthy pseudo-ethnographic passages—, the narrator asserts unironically that *indios* are fond of “la lectura y escritura: raro es el indio que desconoce estas materias, aún en las provincias más atrasadas” (“reading and writing. Rarely can one find an indio who is illiterate, even in the most backward provinces”) (Montero y Vidal 195/166). They are not, however, expected to produce original work: “son limitadas las facultades superiores de su inteligencia” (“their higher intellectual capacity is limited”), but they have a “gran facilidad para imitarlo todo . . . Brillan en la música y tienen afición á otras artes” (“great facility in imitating everything . . . They are brilliant in music and have a propensity for the other branches of the arts”) (195/166). Were they guided by good instructors, the narrator continues, “podrían seguramente producir obras de mérito” (“they could certainly produce works of merit”) (195/166). Through the figure of the pedagogue, it appears that the “reawakening” mentioned in the prologue is actually the replacing of one subjectivity—which reads and writes in a non-Castilian language and labors on imitative art—with another—which reads and writes in Castilian and produces meritorious works directed by another. Castilian pedagogy, then, is a way of providing proper models (of writing, of conduct, etc.) on which *indios* can base their own production, a production that would include self-production through a reflexive critique of their own mores under the benevolent mirror of the Spanish bourgeoisie, of which Montero y Vidal was a member.¹⁹

Montero y Vidal’s prologues are guided, then, by two seemingly non-coincident use-values: one in which information is used for European capitalist expansion, the other in which such information is employed in instruction of *indios filipinos* so as to open them up to discourse

¹⁹ This structure mirrors the development of English as an ethical education in Victorian England as discussed by Ian Hunter. Much of my critique of Montero y Vidal is grounded in Hunter’s understanding of aesthetic education as an ethical technology.

with Europeans and provide them with another language in which to labor (on their imitative art).²⁰ (Montero y Vidal does not state what language the *indios* can already read and write, nor is it clear what reflective capacity this language might offer.) While the second type of value seems to be an aesthetic utility not inherently related to the former economic utility, Montero y Vidal makes it clear that the value of writing is intimately connected to economic value, since, as noted earlier, he justifies the (re)release of his “humble work” by its phenomenal critical *and* market success. Montero y Vidal’s need to justify his work in both domains suggests that the imperial sphere within which he writes is constituted by two distinct axes of value. As these axes are exhibited in *costumbrista* fiction of this period, they reveal two distinct subject positions with different relations to norms of society as these are represented in *costumbrismo*. Blanco has examined such distinctions and the resultant anomie within colonial society as a dynamic between the concepts of “common sense” as used by Kant and Antonio Gramsci: “Where Kant’s enlightenment imagines a *telos* of collective reasoning or rationality and the emergence of a cosmopolitan society, Gramsci’s ‘common sense’ and ‘popular knowledge’ render visible the immanent thresholds and finitude of hegemony, which undergoes radical changes as it folds into and back upon local contexts” (Blanco, *Frontier* 8). But while Blanco concerns himself with the limits of Spanish colonial society and the subject positions it generates, this fiction is equally concerned with the constitution of the Spanish imperial sphere as it generates subjects not only in the colonies, but in the metropole.

In Montero y Vidal’s *costumbrista* story “El vago y el *matandá*” this schema appears most clearly in the climax, but I will first summarize the plot. The story gets its title from the two protagonists: Fonseca and Alvaredo. Fonseca is a *bago*, Tagalog for “new,” which in the

²⁰ This uncannily describes the political economy of aesthetic judgment that Jacques Derrida called “economimesis” (“Economimesis”). I discuss this essay and its negotiation between the aesthetic and the economic in Chapter One.

nineteenth-century Philippines referred to peninsular Spaniards newly arrived in the islands, generally to serve as petty administrators for a brief term and then either returning to Spain or receiving a new commission in one of the other colonies.²¹ Alvaredo is a *matandá*, Tagalog for “elder,” which is used in this story to describe a *peninsular* of many years’ residence in the Philippines. Alvaredo serves throughout the story as an advisor to Fonseca on how to live in the Philippines, and, in the process, Fonseca falls in love with Alvaredo’s *mestiza* (mixed Spanish and *indio filipino*) daughter, Chata, who is equated loosely with the soil (*suelo*) of the colony itself. Upon seeing in the newspaper a notice of his *cesantía*—the lay-off notice for employees of the imperial bureaucracy—Fonseca considers killing himself, rather than leaving the colony and the woman that he has grown to love.

Alvaredo offers instead to bring Fonseca into his own commercial enterprise. In Alvaredo’s plan, the nature of commerce is such that the *indio filipino* can only participate as exploitable labor-power. The scheme into which Alvaredo recruits Fonseca is such:

En las provincias de Cagayan y la Isabela escasea mucho el arroz, pues dedican todos los terrenos á la siembra del tabaco. Tampoco tienen telas. Va V. á trasladarse á esas provincias con una buena cantidad de *cavanes* de arroz, géneros para sayas, camisas, *tapis*, pañuelos y diversos efectos de uso ordinario. No habiéndose hecho todavía el pagamento del tabaco carecerán de dinero, más usted les deja los efectos que deseen en cambio de papeletas ó recibos de tabaco, con un interes proporcionado.

(In the provinces of Cagayan and Isabela, rice is very scarce because all the lands

²¹ Though I do not explore it here, there seems to be an implicit connection in the nineteenth-century Philippines between the *bago* and the *bagongtao* (literally, “new person”), a term that refers throughout this period to young *indio* men, particularly when they are depicted in a romantic courtship. An ontological as well as amorous rival to the *peninsular*, perhaps?

are planted with tobacco. Neither do they have textiles. You [referring to Fonseca] will go to these provinces with a good quantity of rice, fabrics for *sayas*, shirts, *tapis*, scarves, and other articles for daily use. Not having received payment for their tobacco, they will be in need of money, but you can give them the articles they need in exchange for promissory notes or tobacco receipts, with proportionate interest.) (Montero y Vidal 122/101)

The first thing to be noted about this plan is how it represents the Philippine economy as one of monoculture, internal trade, and systems of usurious credit. The story seems to be set in the final decades of the Tobacco Monopoly in the Philippines, a governmental edict that certain districts had to produce given quotas of tobacco for exclusive sale to the colonial state.²² The Monopoly was in many ways a response to the dominance of British exporters and Chinese importers in the Philippine economy as a result of the opening of the port of Manila after 1764. This situation had led Carlos Recur, in the nineteenth century, to claim that “[f]rom the commercial point of view the Philippines is an Anglo-Chinese colony with a Spanish Flag [sic]” (qtd. in Legarda 93).

Here the imaginary of *costumbrismo* reveals itself as not merely a representation of economy, but as itself an economic system. In this economy, the Spanish language and the receipts printed in it are privileged as the medium of valuation, and the *costumbrista* scribe gains valuative position vis-à-vis its represented objects, a mirror image of the trade scheme concocted by Alvaredo. In exchange for the (agricultural or educational) labor demanded in recognition of Spanish authority, the *indios filipinos* will be provided not with necessities themselves, but with the means to trade for them (money and the Spanish language). The surplus value created

²² In 1873, Acting British Consul Oswald Coates wrote that, “Cagayan is the great tobacco field of the Philippines. The labour is forced as every native is obliged to cultivate a certain amount of tobacco land, the produce of which, if equal to the standard size and quality is received and paid for in receipts made payable by the Philippine government” (qtd. in Cushner 203).

through this process will be recouped by Spanish citizens who style themselves as liberal entrepreneurs in order to mask their position of structural advantage.

Alvaredo's plan, then, is to make money from selling essentials to peasants who are required by the government to grow tobacco—instead of rice or cotton—in exchange for money or government-issued bonds on which *peninsulares* will collect the interest. The “objective value” of the money form here obscures relations of exploitation put in place by Spanish authority as a fiction of reciprocal trade. The monetary price of an object, established through exchange relations, masquerades as a value inherent in the object itself, as an objective value. As George Simmel points out, “value is never a ‘quality’ of the objects, but a judgment upon them which remains inherent in the subject” (63). Simmel extends this to claim that the empirical experience of value is an experience of the dissolution of the sense of separation between subject and object as “a claim for recognition” by the object within the subjective experience of that object (69). But as with the aesthetic object, the money form does not “forfeit anything of its reality if this claim is not fulfilled” (69). This is the supposedly “objective” site of both monetary exchange and Kantian aesthetic experiences, where the qualities of an object are perceived by the subject as values that transcend the subject's own particularity. The “objective” qualities of objects in market economies are merely the sites of intersubjective exchange. The “reality” of the object, which resists incorporation into the subjectivity of an aesthetic or monetary experience, is, in fact, the foundation of social relations in a market (or marketizing) economy. Simmel's insight here into the resistance of a “reality” that is the social residue (and *tertium comparationis*) of aesthetic and monetary regimes of value helps explain the particular failures of these regimes within Retana's story and the resultant recourse to a system of authority outside of Philippines society, i.e. the Spanish empire.

While Montero y Vidal does not seem to find the contradictions of this illiberal economy worrisome, contradictory forms of value and valuation present in both his prologue and this story reduce *indios* to a necessary function of Spanish desire and accumulation. In “El vago y el matandá,” the *peninsular* subject is able to capitalize on the *lack* of a common ground with the *indio* peasant on which to negotiate value. Governmental edicts supplement this lack by requiring the cultivation of tobacco in the Tobacco Monopoly and the cultivation of Spanish in the public school. Montero y Vidal thus reveals—however unwittingly—the structural bias of liberal imperialism towards those who can capitalize on a subjectivity that assumes the normativity of European males.²³ The value of labor is tied to the perceived potentiality of the laboring *indio* body, while the credit of capital is linked to the mercantile labor of the *peninsular*, thus producing structural dissimilarities at the moment at which value is quantified. Such distinct potential values, as I will demonstrate in the following reading of a short story by W.E. Retana, also restrict the ability of particular subjects to participate in valuative judgments that can achieve institutionalization.

Retana was one of the foremost Philippinists in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, releasing the first full biography of José Rizal (1907) and collaborating with Pardo Bazán’s favorably reviewed *Feced* throughout the 1880s and 1890s.²⁴ A collection of Retana’s short stories and prose sketches was published in Madrid in 1893, entitled *Filipinas: Cosas de allá... (The Philippines: Tidbits from Over There...)*. The first story in this collection, “Por veinte pesos” (“For Twenty Pesos”), features Chóleng, an *india* woman of a small mountain town

²³ My thinking on this subject is influenced by Simmel’s discussion of *Wergild*, or the payment of money as atonement for murder in Anglo-Saxon culture (355-94). In this discussion, Simmel notes how the development of wage systems has been premised on the division of man’s life into hours and days of labor and how women’s compensation has been produced through the capacity to provide domestic services as a fraction of (white) men’s labor-hours.

²⁴ For more on Retana’s non-fictional work, see Schumacher, “Wenceslao.”

called Masamá (Tagalog for “bad” or “evil”). Though she works harder than the rest of her family to maintain their subsistent existence, her family sells her to a local landlord for twenty pesos in cash and a thirty-peso debt forgiveness. Once Chóleng arrives at the landlord’s house, however, an admirer of hers, an *indio* man named Tílong, breaks into the house along with a band of *tulisanes* (“bandits”) in order to kidnap her. Not seeing her near at hand, however, Tílong takes twenty pesos from a table near the door. A *peninsular* doctor, Don León Flórez, is then called to aid the local officials in investigating the bandits’ attack, where he makes some acerbic comments about the poverty—both economic and mental—of the *indios*, cures an *indio* injured in the attack while pronouncing the patient’s brother dead, and discovers the centrality of Chóleng to the crime. Tílong is then captured. Chóleng does not appear in the story after the first section, other than in the conversations and thoughts of the other characters.

Chóleng is the only sister of an unknown quantity of brothers; “cinco ó seis” (“five or six”), the narrator says (Retana, “Por veinte” 5). The failure of the narrator’s knowledge regarding enumeration—both here and in the estimation of Tílong’s age, later (11)—suggests the impossibility of a rational order under prevailing bureaucratic conditions in the colony discussed by Blanco (*Frontier*). It also curiously mimics the inability to set a “price” on Chóleng mentioned in the summary, above, where she is traded for the twenty *pesos* of the title (which is actually fifty *pesos*, including the debt-forgiveness). The irrationality of the credit economy and the unknowable quantities that are suggested throughout the story demonstrate both the unreason of the *indios* and the impossibility of credit itself as an organizing principle of society.

This does not prevent the narrator from attempting to construct a social basis out of the principle of labor (as value). In Retana’s “Por veinte pesos,” value is written starkly on the laboring bodies of *indios*. But while the *peninsular* in this story can quickly take stock of these

values, the *indios* represented do not understand the connection between labor, money, and valuation. The contrast between *indios* and *peninsulares* is therefore as much in their conceptualization of value as their production and consumption of it. As a result of the mental insufficiencies Retana claims to be a part of the racial psychology of the *indio filipino*,²⁵ characters such as Tínon, Chóleng, and her family are perpetually indebted, exploited, and misrecognized.

Chóleng is described as “la que más trabajaba de la casa. . . . Chóleng pilaba mongos ó palay, cuándo desgranaba maíz, cuándo mondaba camotes; y si nada de esto tenía que hacer, que era lo más importante, tejía sinamay en su telar, ó lavaba la ropa de todos los de la casa, ó se iba por agua al arroyuelo que había no muy lejos” (“the one who worked hardest around the house. . . . Chóleng husked beans and rice, removed corn kernels from the cob, cleaned sweet potatoes; and if she had none of this to do, which was the most important, she wove *sinamay* on her loom, or washed the clothes of the household, or went to and fro collecting water from the stream that was not far away”) (5). This contrasts with the indolence of her brothers: “ninguno de ellos hacía gran cosa durante todo el año” (“not a one of them did much all year”) (5). In addition to her superlative work ethic, Chóleng is also physically superior to her family. Her father is described as “un indio montaraz, desmadejado, de rostro curtido y pelo greñado” (“a mountain *indio*, slack of body, with a sun-burnt face and matted hair”) (5). Chóleng, by contrast, is “alta, fornida, de cutis bastante moreno, pero suavísimo como el raso; tenía una abundante mata de pelo; los ojos rasgados, algo melancólicos; la boca pequeña, pero un tanto abultada; . . . los pechos turgentes; anchas y carnosas las caderas . . . : era una hembra de primera con todas, codiciada de los pocos solteros que la conocían” (“tall, well-built, with skin that was very brown, but soft as satin; she

²⁵ It is no secret the contempt with which Retana viewed the *indios filipinos*. For a sample of this, see the essays collected in Retana, *Avisos*, as well as Schumacher, “Wenceslao.”

had a thick head of hair; slanted eyes, somewhat melancholy; a small mouth, but with full lips; . . . sculpted breasts; thick and meaty thighs; . . . she was a first-rate female, desired by the few bachelors who knew her”) (5-6). Her physical attributes exemplify beauty as much as her work ethic exemplifies her moral character. Her father, in contrast, “acariciaba horas y horas, mascando con deleite un buyo, su hermoso gallo talísay” (“caressed his beautiful fighting cock for hours and hours, while chewing betel nut with delight”) (5).

Chóleng’s virtues are underappreciated by her family, causing the narrator to lament that “[a] la manera que muchas preciosas flores, que nacen, se desarrollen y mueren ignoradas, del propio modo Chóleng era una fragante rosa de la montaña, de cuya existencia nadie casi tenía noticia” (“in the manner of many precious flowers, who are born, develop, and die in oblivion, so was Chóleng a fragrant mountain rose, of whose existence scarcely anyone took notice”) (6). And yet Chóleng’s fine figure attracts both Tínong, the bandit who wishes to kidnap her, and the landlord of her family’s property, suggesting that it is not that “scarcely anyone” knows about her, but that no one who desires her knows her “true” value, defined by the narrator as a set of labor skills and physiological components, intangible qualities that are, nonetheless, registered on her exquisitely described body. As it turns out, the failure of both Tínong and the landlord is to mistake Chóleng’s worth as an exchangeable value that can be realized in money, the “twenty pesos” of the title. As the landlord purchases her for this amount (plus a thirty-peso debt forgiveness) and Tínong accepts the theft of this amount as a substitute for his failed kidnapping plot, the derisive comments of the narrator as to Chóleng’s neglect suggest that there is a not (yet) monetized value that is a more appropriate means of appreciating her qualities, a value which escapes the understanding of the *indios* that desire her. Living outside the orbit of a proper evaluator (such as the narrator of “Por veinte pesos”), Chóleng develops without a *proper* value

attached to her, only the too-quickly-monetized valuations wrongfully applied by rural *indios*. They, unlike the narrator, mistake a “price” for a “value,” seeing Chóleng in terms of the symbol arising from an exchange relation (money) and not the value that it is meant to represent (labor-power).

Price can be distinguished from value to the extent that some things which have a price have no value. Marx explains this with recourse to the qualities of “conscience” and “honor,” which, not being the product of a conscious labor-process, can have no “value” in capitalism, even as they can be “offered for sale by their holders” (*Capital* 115). Since Chóleng has the qualities of industriousness and beauty, but yet did not labor on these with conscious intent, they are offered at the indeterminate price of twenty (or fifty) *pesos* despite being devoid of “value,” properly speaking. This distinction between value and price, however, only exists in the abstract, and is made possible because of the generalized quality of exchange in a particular society (Simmel 94-101). As Simmel points out, “society is a structure that transcends the individual, but that is not abstract,” since it is lived as a coherent whole (101). Simmel’s insistence on the particularity of society suggests that Chóleng’s being rendered as a price without value—that is, the inability to understand her body as a product of a labor-process—is the result of the particular society in which she lives, where she grows as a ignored mountain rose.

As both an aesthetic and monetized object, Chóleng comes to constitute a misrecognition that is the impetus for social disruption. Having been sold for “treinta pesos del utan” and “veinte pesos de regalo” (“thirty pesos of debt” and “twenty pesos in gift”) to a lascivious landowner, the desire she inspires also in Tínong leads to his raid on the landlord’s house, where his search for her is called off for another twenty pesos (Retana, “Por veinte” 8).²⁶ The mysterious equation—

²⁶ Retana uses a Spanish corruption of the Tagalog *utang* (“debt”), rather than the Spanish (*deuda*). “Regalo,” though Spanish in origin, is the same in both languages.

Chóleng = 50 pesos = 20 pesos—suggests the incoherency of value in a money economy, an instability that the *indios* do not or cannot acknowledge.²⁷ Chóleng, like the money for which she is exchanged, has become a symbol, the exchange of which is the only value recognized by her *indio* interlocutors. The confusion that is symbolic value also poses a threat to the social order: the threat of a desire that can be and is sublimated in murder and money. In her ideality, exquisitely invoked by a lengthy description of her body, she becomes an aestheticized object that disrupts social order through its interpretability and transvaluation into other forms, i.e. money.

Chóleng, conversely, cannot evaluate herself as she has nothing with which to measure, neither desire nor ideal: she “no había amado nunca, ni tal vez lo deseaba. Dentro de su ser no existía ideal ninguno” (“had never loved, nor maybe even desired to do so. In her being there existed not a single ideal”) (6). Without an ideal garnered through the experience of love, Chóleng has no desire, and without desire, she is incapable of the judgment on which commercial society depends.²⁸ Desire, as the manifestation of the subject’s freedom (of choice), renders Chóleng’s labor as mere work, exploitable by the imagination, but not imaginable by Chóleng herself. Having neither desire nor ideal, Chóleng therefore has no ability to operate in the symbolic realm necessary for exchange even as her existence is necessary for the development of a proto-logic of money in her family, their landlord, and Tínong. If she has no ideal inside of her, it is safe to say, following the description above, that this is because she embodies the ideal itself. This position, then, in her being the exemplar of a generality (“first-rate female”), she is emptied of motives and desires and takes on the appearance of the fetishized

²⁷ I owe the insight into this slippage in equivalence to Kiko Benitez.

²⁸ On the relationship of desire (as freedom) to labor, see Chapter One, above.

commodity.²⁹

The famous ventriloquism that Karl Marx performs with the commodity resembles the (overly hasty) appreciation of Chóleng by her *indio* admirers: “Could commodities themselves speak, they would say: Our use-value may be a thing that interests men [cf. Chóleng’s labor-power]. It is no part of us as objects. What, however, does belong to us as objects, is our value. Our natural intercourse as commodities proves it. In the eyes of each other we are nothing but exchange values” (95). Marx’s discussion of the commodity here is so remarkable for interpellating the self-reflection of (Kantian) subjectivity within the reified form of the object of labor. This process is the fetishization of the commodity-form, the perception of purposiveness (i.e. exchange-value) within an object stripped of purpose (i.e. labor as imaginative action). In Retana’s story, no one other than the narrator seems to see Chóleng as anything but exchange-value, that is, Chóleng as a price. Chóleng herself is rendered incapable of commenting upon her own exchangeability. She appears as a pure image with no interiority, a (Kantian) aesthetic object in that she appears as designed with purpose without that purpose being known (at least by her *indio* admirers).³⁰

The ontological reality of Chóleng (as woman, labor-power, *india filipina*, etc.) is revealed to be underdetermined; or, rather, overdetermined by the discourses of money, knowledge, and labor, by the complex text of capitalism written into her body. Upon Don León’s discovery of her as motive of the crime, she embodies also the desire that restores social order within the Spanish Empire, that is, the desire for a secure origin of valuation that only *peninsulares* would

²⁹ The figure of the Filipina woman is particularly invested with the problems of valuation in the Spanish Philippines at this period, and may be symptomatic of the perception of “literature” as that which proceeds not from labor, but from nature itself. Though I do not have space to broach this subject here, some related works on gender in the Philippines at the end of the nineteenth century include Elizabeth Eviota (47-62) and Raquel Reyes. On the relationship between labor and nature in the discourse of the “literary,” see Chapter One, as well as the section in this chapter on “The Geography of Global Literary Time,” below.

³⁰ On beauty as an object’s presentation of “purposiveness” without presentation of “purpose,” see Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* 105-20, as well as Chapter One, above.

be capable of determining. The instability that Chóleng represents is thus invoked and fixed by the Spanish colonial administration, even as her commodifiability suggests the discourses of slavery that were animating a different complex of race/value taking place in the Caribbean colonies.³¹ *Peninsulares* are then capitalizing, at the level of the social, on the projections of value the imperial system establishes at the level of the material. The determination of the former by the latter is, simultaneously, restricted by the cultivation of valuative judgment through the apparatus of the aesthetically bound community.

The Geography of Global Literary Time

The imperial projection of values written into Retana's "Por veinte pesos" animates the discussion of literary style, as well. Retana's later estimation of the collection in which this story appears bears this out. Beginning in 1906, Retana released a bibliography of works about the Philippines that had been collected by the *Compañía General de Tabacos*, based in Barcelona, his *Aparato bibliográfico (Bibliographic Apparatus)*. In keeping with the literary developments that surrounded him in twentieth-century Spain, Retana notes that the value of his collection, *Filipinas: Cosas de allá...*, lies not in their old-fashioned style, but in when and where they were valued: "Para dar una idea en España de cómo andaba la crítica literaria en Filipinas, agavillé en este pequeño volumen algunos cuentos y novelillas, los que más me habían celebrado allá, y que hoy me avergonzaría de volver á firmarlos" ("In order to give an idea in Spain of how literary criticism in the Philippines was developing, I collected in this little volume a few stories and novellas, those for which I had been most celebrated over there, and which today would

³¹ Perhaps the best analysis of the relation between empire and race in Spanish imperial culture is Christopher Schmidt-Nowara's work, though his focus is restricted to the Caribbean. A broader analysis of the relation in Spanish imperial literature between money, commodities, and slavery across the whole empire deserves further inquiry. My study, however, is concerned only with how such discourses as these have determined the literary field into the modern era.

embarrass me to sign once more”) (Retana, *Aparato* 3: 1283). There is much upon which to comment in this short note, but I will focus on three elements: the temporal distinction that Retana makes (“today [they] would embarrass me to sign once more,” although he had signed them readily in the past), the coincident (correlative) geographical distance (the implicit suggestion that he also would *never* have signed them here [*acá*] as opposed to there [*allá*]), and, most of all, how this celebration of such “cuentos” and “novelillas” in the Philippines represents a broader cultural problem: the poor development of literary culture in the Archipelago.

Retana opens up the temporal dimension of literary value in the curious play of tenses in the passage quoted above. The passage begins in a non-specific infinitive form (“dar una idea”), establishing in Spain (“en España”) an unmarked time from which Retana’s criticism itself seems to flow. This time is one of literary criticism (“la crítica literaria”), which marches (another meaning of “andar,” the infinitive form of “andaba”) to a rhythm determined by geography (“en Filipinas”). Outside of quotidian time, this unmarked time acts as a gift, an “exteriority that sets the circle [of giving and receiving, that is, of exchange] going,” and that, through its exteriority, “puts the economy in motion” (Derrida, *Given* 30). Though the economy under consideration here is that of literary criticism, its “gifted” nature is the same as that of literature itself in Jacques Derrida’s formulation, and, in fact, is a part of this very process of exchange. This gift acts as the *fondo* of literary development, both its “background” and “basis.” For a global criticism to take place, for Retana (in Spain, in 1906) to be able to criticize himself (in the Philippines, in the 1880s), for a criticism (“la crítica literaria”) to exist that can transcend time and place, a time must first be given that subsists of itself outside of the contingencies of quotidian time as experienced. This idea of a global time of the literary—in which Pascale Casanova’s work is located—is what is necessary for the possibility of a global criticism. For

there to be a possibility that a Spanish writer working in Spain in the early twentieth century could provide a critique of the same figure that bears his name working in the Philippines in the late nineteenth century, Retana must imagine a time outside of contingency in which literary value is a discrete object that persists *through* time rather than being *a product of* a particular time.

In Retana's statement above, an ontological value we can call "the literary" is marked through its distribution, not only in time, but in space. Spain is the site of a universal, unmarked time, the infinite time that makes historical time a possibility. Because of this, it is impossible to discern to which Spain he is referring in the first sentence: is he giving literary time to the Spain of 1906, stripped of its colonial holdings by an expanding United States imperialism, or is it to the Spain of 1893, when his "little volume" appeared, when Spain still tenuously retained the Philippine Archipelago that this volume claims to represent? The grammatical impossibility of telling these two times apart in Retana's auto-critique reveals an underlying indifference in the realm of the literary, where the possibility of the "literary" as the object of literary criticism depends on its being "a machine for provoking events" that subsists both radically in time as a cause of events and radically outside of time as itself having no *recognized* cause (Derrida, *Given* 96).

This possibility becomes increasingly unstable, for the idea to which it ostensibly refers, namely, "cómo andaba la crítica literaria en Filipinas" ("how literary criticism in the Philippines was developing"), assumes that the global time posited in the infinitive opening statement does not adhere to particular events. Thus the imperfect tense of "*andaba* la crítica literaria en Filipinas" (emphasis added) suggests that the global time of the literary operates (yet another possible translation of *andar*) at different rates in different circumstances and locales. Retana is

not, after all, critiquing *Philippine* literary criticism (possibly, “la crítica literaria filipina,” or, “la crítica literaria de Filipinas”), which would imply a distinct development separated from the world even as it forms a part of it. He critiques here *literary criticism itself* as it manifests *in* a Philippines coincident in time with and located in relation to the Spain from which he writes.

Retana’s distancing himself from his own writings is compounded by the conditional tense of his shame. He writes, “me *avergonzaría* de volver a firmarlos” (“*would embarrass* me to sign once more,” emphasis added), implying not only his *lack* of shame in the present conjunction, but the possibility of a parallel self who *would* (should?) feel ashamed of writing these stories. That the signing could exist in his mind as a repeatable event (“volver a”), produces a spectral double of himself that does, indeed, sign this collection, albeit with the attendant embarrassment. The parallel life of shame in this formulation is the result of a radically disjunctive spatio-temporal regime—an aesthetic-imperial regime—that appears as a series of shifts in grammatical tense, but can be traced back to the geographical difference at the origin of the global time of the literary.

Derrida traces the gift back to “a position of non-knowing with regard to. . . the effects” of what has been given (*Given* 170). The production of the gift as a value is thus based on a credit extended to an organized unity that is “reconstituted after the fact on the basis of a simulacrum (for example, literature) that it is thought to cause” (170). “The literary”, then, bears the form of a gift, in that it is a contingent formation that is reconstructed after its effects are perceived in a text. What Retana’s texts suggest, however, is that the practical application of this discourse of causality and freedom to literature is structured by the circulations of value in a world imagined as global, and therefore that the “gift” of literature as freedom may be thought of as a good

extracted from the imperial division of the world.³² As the literary is a product of converging contingencies, it is a form of “non-labor,” in contrast to Karl Marx’s definition of “labor” as “a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement” (*Capital* 198). Labor is distinguished from mere work by appearing “in a form that stamps it as exclusively human” (198). While, in fact, any literary text may be an example of this definition of labor, the discipline of literature itself—in the form of “literary criticism”—proceeds from no imagination and projects its non-laborious origin as an ideological fantasy onto its objects of inquiry (Eagleton, *The Ideology* 9). In other words, the discipline of literature and the valuative schema of the literary are products of no labor, yet, like Chóleng in “Por veinte pesos,” desirable for their ability to produce abstracted values commodified (through money) in an imperial market culture.

I discuss how such global disciplines developed in the late-eighteenth century alongside the growth of global market capitalism in Chapter One, so let me point here only to the clear indication that Retana gives that this is linked directly to the problem of a global time of the literary. In this passage from the *Aparato bibliográfico*, the only prepositional phrases that Retana uses to specify the relations he is establishing between his own work and the task of literary criticism are the phrases “en España,” “en Filipinas,” “allá,” and “hoy.” While “en España” and “en Filipinas” clearly contrast in the first clause (“In order to give an idea *in Spain* of how literary criticism *in the Philippines* was developing,” emphasis added), neither “allá” nor “hoy” have clear contrastive elements. While the time marker “hoy” presumably contrasts with the moment in which the stories were collected (“agavillé,” the simple past tense) and published in Spain, it may also refer to the even earlier moment in which they were celebrated (“habían

³² For an opposing but useful reading of how “postcolonial” literatures figure into a concept of “world literature,” see Cheah, “The Material.”

celebrado,” the past perfect tense) in the Philippines (that other unpaired term, “allá”). But while “hoy” may contrast to the two previous temporal moments, it also introduces the difference within the global time of the literary, as that for which he was celebrated there (“allá”) comes to be that which today (“hoy”) would embarrass him to sign again (“volver á firmarlos”). The temporality of the literary is thus spatially distributed.

As much as Retana’s brief paragraph above represents a critique of his own fictions, it is quite clear that it is also a critique of “literary criticism in the Philippines” that would celebrate them. *Falsa modestia* (“false modesty”) as a trope of literary value may be at play here, certainly. However, I would like to suggest that, beyond this, there is a division of the globe as a geographical idea into temporalities of literary development where what is celebrated in one area (e.g. the Philippines) becomes a source of embarrassment in another (e.g. Spain). That Retana maps these developmental temporalities onto geographies of labor and resource exploitation is no coincidence,³³ but results from the very way that literature as a discipline with global pretensions is conceived, that is, as an object with a value that is *not* contingent. The presumption of this object (literature) that has (literary) value is what enables criticism (“la crítica literaria”) as a means of authenticating or validating the value of a given text.

It is, however, the very disjuncture of time and space discussed above that makes possible Retana’s critical and valuative stance, as evidenced in both of his texts. If, as shown in Montero y Vidal’s introduction, *costumbrismo* creates the distinct and racialized ideal subjects on which communal belonging will be based in the specular representation of “custom,” this specular-position haunts Retana himself in the *Aparato bibliográfico*, as he attempted to take into view metropolitan norms and the field of all imperial possibilities, however aberrant or “backward.” It

³³ This departs determinedly from Casanova, who rejects a relationship between regimes of economic and political exploitation those of literary value. Cheah has offered a similar critique of Casanova at a lecture at the University of Washington (“What Is a World? Postcolonial”).

is the subject as object of value and valuation, the self-division that Montero y Vidal believed was necessary for imperial subjects to “produce works of merit.” The self-division evident in phrases like “volver a firmarlos” and the ambiguity of times embedded in the *Aparato bibliográfico* is the catechresis that José Rizal called “el demonio de las comparaciones” (“the demon of comparisons”) in his novel, *Noli me tângere* (1887), both the haunting of difference experienced as comparison by subjects of empire and the compulsion to compare as a result of the same (Rizal, *Noli* 43).³⁴ The incommensurability of terms (Spain/the Philippines, metropole/colony, present/past) is the moment that comparison is possible, for there is no comparison where there is no difference. It is also the moment that synthesis into a single unity such as “literature” reveals the aporia at its origins, as the terms remain unequal and unequalizable. This aporetic core of imperial culture is the demon—or daemon—of comparison itself, both its driving force toward unity and its continual differentiation.³⁵

These stories that have been slow to enter the realm of “world literature”—if, in fact, they have—nonetheless reveal the mechanisms of the cultural system in which they appeared more directly than either their best-known metropolitan interlocutors (e.g. Pardo Bazán) or their archipelagic antagonists (e.g. Rizal). From the perspective of these “humble works” there is only one possible access to peripheral (or emergent or minor or Philippine) literatures, one of untimeliness and dis-place-ment. I would say that it is Retana’s—and even more, Montero y

³⁴ The translation to English by Ma. Soledad Lacson-Locsin that I use below gives this passage as “the devil of comparisons” (51), which does not retain enough of the Socratic “daemon” for my taste. However, all subsequent references to this text will refer initially to the Spanish-language text, followed by page numbers for the Lacson-Locsin’s translation after the slash. For a contemporary use of this figure in order to revivify comparative work, see Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons*. “Spectre of comparisons” is Anderson’s idiosyncratic translation of this phrase, what he calls a mistranslation in *Under* (32).

³⁵ Cheah discusses the twin drives of comparison as ethics and competition in “The Material.” His discussion of comparison informs my discussion of world literature here, although where he is concerned with the material base of comparison in regimes of biopower, I am concerned here with what he calls “an aesthetic-cognitive mapping of how the mechanisms and technologies of infrastructural comparison work in specific locations and their negative, coercive effects” (543).

Vidal's—mistake to read this “untimeliness” as mere aberrance from norms, instead of the structural element whose possibility is what allows the possibility of the “timeliness” of the core (or dominant or major or Spanish) literatures to which Retana implicitly compares them.

Conclusion

And what of literature produced by *indios filipinos* themselves? Does such literature also share in the imperial spatio-temporality of value so evident in Retana and Montero y Vidal? Turning to Rizal's landmark novel, *Noli me tangere*—affectionately called the *Noli*—suggests the extent of this valuative schema by the late nineteenth century. In an amusing scene in Rizal's text, two factions of townspeople meet in the Town Hall of San Diego to discuss the upcoming celebration of their patron saint. Don Filipino, head of the liberals and *teniente mayor*, knowing that the conservative faction will oppose anything introduced by the liberal faction, concocts a plan. He will present a proposal that the conservatives, dominated by older men, would like, a profligate affair including *komedya*—a Philippine theatrical genre depicting romance and heroic legends—and a huge fireworks display, as well as cockfights and cards (Rizal 107-08/116). The conservatives, infuriated by the speaker more than by his plan, lead a defeat of Don Filipino, carrying, as well, the votes of the liberals who were not made aware of the plot.

Following this, a young *cabeza de barangay*, recruited by Don Filipino but not recognized as a part of the liberal faction, steps up and proposes that the money raised from contributions for the festival “se emplee en alguna cosa de utilidad para todos” (“[be] utilized for something useful for everyone concerned”) (Rizal 109/118). The young *cabeza* critiques the *komedya* as a genre, a critique whose relationship to the concerns of this chapter is worth quoting at length:

¿Qué sacamos nosotros de una semana de comedias que pide el teniente mayor?
¿Qué aprendemos con los reyes de Bohemia y Granada, que mandan cortar la cabeza a sus hijas o las cargan en un cañón y luego el cañón se convierte en trono? Ni somos reyes, ni somos bárbaros, ni tenemos cañones, y si les imitásemos nos ahorcarían en Bagumbayan. ¿Qué son esas princesas que se mezclan en las batallas, reparten tajos y mandobles, pelean con príncipes y vagan solas por montes y valles, como seducidas del *Tikbálang* ? En nuestras costumbres amamos la dulzura y la ternura en la mujer y temeríamos estrechar unas manos de doncella, manchadas de sangre, aun cuando esta sangre fuese la de un moro o gigante . . . ¿No sería mil veces mejor que representásemos la pintura de nuestras propias costumbres, para corregir nuestros vicios y defectos y ensalzar las buenas cualidades ?

(What will we get from the week of *komedya* proposed by the *Teniente Mayor*? What can we learn from the kings of Bohemia and Granada, who order their daughters to be beheaded or load them into a cannon which is later converted into a throne? We are neither kings nor barbarians, nor do we have cannons; and if we imitated them we would be hanged in Bagumbayan. What are those princesses doing who go into battles, exchange strokes and two-handed blows with the sword; do battles with princes and roam alone through mountains and valleys seduced by the *tikbalang*? In our customs we love sweetness and tenderness in a woman—and we would be fearful to clasp a damsel's hands which are reeking with blood, even if this were the blood of an infidel or a giant. . . . Would it not be

a thousand times better for us to depict our own customs in order to correct our vices and defects and commend the good qualities?) (109-10/119)³⁶

Ultimately, though the *cabeza*'s plan is approved by the assembled men, the project is not implemented due to the intervention of the parish priest, who insists on the spending of funds collected from the townspeople on multiple masses, sermons, and, if anything is left over, on the *komedya* against which the *cabeza* had inveighed (111/121).

Rizal demonstrates the ridiculousness of the conservative position in this scene, exposing their desire to oppose the liberal faction as their primary concern, over and above any positive desires of their own. But what is even more interesting here is that the liberal faction, sympathetically portrayed in the *Noli* through their more complex motivation and their support for the protagonist's plans to build a school, commits itself to a political project that can be expressed through a distinction in theatrical genres. The conservative and religious sectors of society prefer the *komedya*, which the *cabeza* depicts as fanciful, escapist, even antagonistic to cultural norms of female propriety.³⁷ The *komedya* was "a creation of the feudal society, a tool of the colonial order and a vehicle for fantasy and escape," claims Nicanor Tiongson, arguably the foremost contemporary authority on Philippine theatre (23). This assessment seems like it could have been placed neatly in Rizal's novel itself, were it not for the mordant irony throughout the *Noli*. The liberal faction in the novel, on the other hand, works to display something else to the townsfolk, something the *cabeza* calls "nuevos espectáculos que no sean los ordinarios y comunes que vemos cada día" ("new spectacles which are not the ordinary or common ones we

³⁶ Bagumbayan was a site of execution in the late nineteenth century and is the location where Rizal was executed. Now called Luneta Park, it contains the largest monument to Rizal in the Philippines. The *tikbalang* is, according to the notes of the Lacson-Locsin translation of the *Noli*, "[a] creature of lower Philippine mythology, said to assume the form of an old man, or a horse, or a monster" (442 n. 11).

³⁷ As in my discussion of Chóleng, the centrality of the figure of women to the discourse of (literary) value and modernity is glaring. I do not mean to downplay the importance of gender to these projects, though I do not discuss it here. Raquel Reyes' work is a necessary complement to this chapter.

see daily”) (109/118). These “new spectacles” would mirror and represent the customs of the people to themselves. The liberals, that is to say, wish to bring before the people a *costumbrista* theater.

Here, as elsewhere in *ilustrado* thought, liberalism is meant to be a public, educative process that brings the people to an understanding of themselves as a collective body.³⁸ And it is not just Filipino *ilustrados* that sought to replace the conventional fantasies of the *komedya* but their antagonists in the Spanish intellectual sphere, such as, again, Retana. In the post-Philippine Revolution estimation of Retana, the *komedya* represents “lo exótico fastuoso, extraordinario y trágico; en una palabra, aquello que jamás han visto” (“the sumptuous, extraordinary, and tragic exotic; in a word, that which they have never seen”) (*Noticias* 123). Retana laments a continued lack of realistic representation of the Philippines in the Spanish-language literature of the Archipelago up to the present day of his writing, in 1909.³⁹ Yet it is the very spectacle of contemporary insular reality that the parish priest quashes in Rizal’s novel. Where Retana, in 1909, focuses on the positive, progressive project of a *costumbrista* theater, Rizal, in 1887, emphasizes instead that the *komedya* represents fantasies that risk sedition: “[I]f we imitated [the scenes in the *komedya*] we would be hanged in Bagumbayan.” Rizal’s evaluation of the *komedya*, though as critical of it as Retana’s, suggests a traitorous reading of the *komedya* that completely escapes the Peninsular, despite the fact that the latter had certainly read the *Noli*,

³⁸ Courtney Johnson’s reading of José Rizal’s juvenilia is particularly revealing of this tendency, as the young Rizal wrote and published many of his early poems in school newspapers, even as their appearance in print challenged imperial policy regarding the capacity of *indios* and constituted a reading public whose very existence subverted colonial culture while claiming to participate in it (Johnson 140-48). Smita Lahiri and Megan Thomas both write about the challenges to developing a “public sphere” in the censored media of the Spanish Philippines.

³⁹ *Noticias histórico-bibliográficas de el [sic] teatro in Filipinas desde sus orígenes hasta 1898* advertises a publication date of 1909, though the date of printing is given in the back as 1910. In Chapter Five, below, I will argue that Retana’s “exótico” is what might be called a “worlding” of Philippine society. I should also note that all of Retana’s sources in the *Noticias* appear to be in Spanish, and many of them secondary accounts of Philippine dramaturgy. His access to the world of the *indios filipinos* seems, at best, limited, if not outright denied.

even providing a review of it in the paper he ran with Feced, *La Política de España en Filipinas* (1891-98).⁴⁰

There is something very strange in this scene that must be explained: the conservatives are advocating something foreign and “against” custom (which is, however, a common spectacle), something that, in some interpretations, could lead to sedition. The liberals, the young, and the *pilosopong* Tasio, an old *indio filipino* who espouses Enlightenment values and advises the liberal faction, are advocating the mirroring of the Filipinos’ own customs back at them (as is Montero y Vidal and the later Retana of the *Noticias*). Is the *cabeza*’s description of the *komedya* a fearful reaction to the threat of a nationalist authorship that tended “to spur [domestic desires] into uncharted and at times revolutionary directions” (Rafael, *Promise* 65)? While Vicente Rafael champions the “traitorous” potential of the *komedya*, Rizal’s liberals disdain it, calling instead for the educative potential of *costumbrismo*. As it turned out, both in the *Noli* and in Rizal’s trial and execution for having written it, the representation of custom proved even more traitorous in Spanish imperial eyes than the authorship of Tagalog-language *komedya*, with all their cannons and swordfights.

Customs, for Rizal, are the making present of the present so that the witnesses to it might reflect upon it, rather than be trapped within it. It is, in other words, presence with a difference, an untimeliness that exposes the present as different from itself. As I will discuss in the following chapter, the system of “untimeliness” that pervades Montero y Vidal, Retana, and Rizal decouples the subject from its own volition, such that aesthetic experience becomes the inability of the subject to act upon objects that are seen to be extensions of the self. The result is a subject whose sources and effects reside not in the self, but in the marketized world of objects

⁴⁰ See Retana, *Aparato* (3:1461) for an entry on an expanded version of the review (a version that was never published).

that represent an extension of global capital into the daily experience of colonial life under the United States Empire.

Chapter Four: Imperial Identities and Inconvertible Money: Puerto Rico, 1894-1922

Introduction

Twenty-three years before the release of his third novel, *El negocio* (*The Business*, 1922), and six months after the invasion of Puerto Rico by United States military forces, Manuel Zeno Gandía and two other prominent Puerto Rican liberals traveled to Washington, D.C. to pressure President McKinley to grant the colony its independence. The three men—Zeno Gandía, José Julio Henna, and Eugenio María de Hostos—called themselves the Puerto Rican Commissioners and wrote a series of letters to McKinley, as well as to his Secretaries of War and of the Treasury, and to the New York Chamber of Commerce. These they published in 1899 as a pamphlet, entitled *The Case of Puerto Rico*.¹ Among the letters that they wrote are several that have to do with the economic situation of the island, ranging from suggestions for reform of the tariff laws and the tax code, to a discussion of agricultural possibilities in the colony. The variety of topics they include in their economic purview is broad, and some of the questions raised in the pamphlet—such as the condition of rural education and the role of monopoly in export programs under the Spanish regime—are also represented in Zeno Gandía's novelistic output.

Of particular interest to the Commissioners is the state of the currency used in Puerto Rico, a topic that animates a letter of five pages in length (Henna and Zeno Gandía 39-44). This is so

¹ Though Hostos is a signatory to the majority of letters in the pamphlet, his absence from Washington, D.C. near the end of the Commissioners's time there kept his name off of the final collection as author.

vital, they claim, because it “is not only a matter of political economy, but of social importance as well” (39). They go on to outline the recent history of currency in the colony, beginning with the independence movements of the Spanish American Republics in the early part of the nineteenth century. The revolutions on the continent, they note, brought a wave of immigration to Puerto Rico, which brought with it an irregular currency called the “Macuquina,” whose non-standardized weights and variable material composition sowed financial disorder in the colony until it was finally outlawed by the Spanish government in the island (40). This was followed by the confusion brought about through the bonds issued as indemnity to slave-owners upon the abolition of slavery, bonds that were traded at reduced rates of exchange, often for Mexican silver, thereby causing “capricious fluctuations of the rates of exchange” (41).²

Because of these irregularities—which were, in fact, the norm of Puerto Rican political economy throughout the nineteenth century³—Henna, Zeno Gandía, and Hostos argue that an average value of the previous decades cannot serve as a just means of setting the value of the Puerto Rican peso at the turn of the century. Instead, they write, “the intrinsic value of the special ‘peso’ of Puerto Rico is the only just one, since it is the true one, and justice ever seeks the truth” (43). The difference between the intrinsic value of the metal used in minting the Puerto Rican peso and the conventional value at which it circulated at the time was about 25 cents (44). Their argument is not based solely on their perception of the “truth” of money, however. Though an artificially valued currency might be acceptable in a “responsible and well-governed nation,” where it will “at all times [be] redeemable by the Treasury,” they argue, in the nebulously unsovereign territory of Puerto Rico, such a policy could only bring about disaster (43). Instead,

² The injustice of indemnifying slave-owners for the freedom of those enslaved is not broached at all in their recounting of this monetary history. For the role of indemnity in securing abolition in Puerto Rico, see Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery* 135-38.

³ James L. Dietz (30) compresses this history into a succinct paragraph.

they suggest a compromise between the value of the metal itself and the conventional value at which it circulates.

Curiously, the Commissioners can be seen as having “won” as regards their suggestion of “[e]stablishing an average value between the intrinsic and the conventional” values of between 41 and 42 cents and $66 \frac{2}{3}$ cents, respectively (Henna and Zeno Gandía 44). The exchange rate was set at 60 cents to the dollar, which, however, led to increasing prices on consumer goods in the colony—by up to 40 percent, according to some accounts—and facilitating the entrance of United States capital into the island (Dietz 90-91).

The establishment of a value for money is no simple calculation, dependent as it is on such diverse factors as political will, market confidence, and labor availability (among many others). Even Karl Marx, writing in an era in which money’s relationship to the reserve metal to which it supposedly referred was still largely taken for granted, wrote of money’s ambivalence in the world of exchange. Thus, while gold coin in Marx’s account serves as both “the measure of value inasmuch as it is the socially recognised incarnation of human labour” and “the standard of price inasmuch as it is a fixed weight of metal” (*Capital* 1.110), its very nature as *both of these* lends itself to inflation and corruption. Marx notes historical examples of the use of silver and copper coins as representatives of (i.e. convertible into) quantities of gold as fixed by law, which leads to the possibility of gold’s circulation as medium of currency coming to an end. As a result, “[t]here would no longer be any standard” (144), and whatever tokens replaced gold would function “as the circulating medium, and as nothing else” (144-45). The disparity that Henna, Zeno Gandía, and Hostos discuss in their letter to President McKinley between the conventional value of the peso and its intrinsic value (i.e. the value of its metal on the market) is a crisis of exactly the type suggested in Marx’s evaluation.

As the outline of nineteenth-century history provided by the Commissioners suggests, the problems of convertibility were not an entirely new development in the colony. In 1899, the amount of foreign debts owed by Puerto Rico became valued in the United States dollar, causing a crisis of fiscal solvency that these three reformers sought to address through a direct petition to President McKinley. By this year, these debts reached 60,000,000 Puerto Rican pesos, or between US\$26,400,000 and US\$40,000,000 of 1899 gold-backed currency (depending on what exchange value is assigned to the peso). To make matters worse, the incoming imperial power was itself going through a phase of national uncertainty regarding the monetary standard, with the Gold-Standard-bearing Republican William McKinley being elected President twice between 1896 and 1900, both times against the bimetallist, anti-imperial Democrat William Jennings Bryan.⁴ The value of Puerto Rican debts is thus a matter of negotiation in the eyes of the Commissioners, who perhaps saw in President McKinley a sympathetic listener to a plea for setting the value of the peso-as-medium close to the value of the peso-as-standard.

According to the literary critic Walter Benn Michaels, it was this very state of uncertainty in the United States as regards the reality of value in society that led to the production of a strain of literary naturalism. In Michaels' interpretation, naturalism in the United States was "above all obsessed with manifestations of internal difference or, what comes to the same thing, personhood" (22). Locating "naturalism" within a discourse on the relation between material and immaterial, Michaels suggests that "naturalism" arises from the same anxieties that produce the "self" of William James' psychology or the debates around the gold standard. These anxieties can be expressed as the discrepancy inherent in "the desire to make yourself equal to your face value, to become gold," which, in turn, "is to efface both writing as writing and money as

⁴ On the role of monetary standards in presidential election of 1896, see Stanley L. Jones. Walter Benn Michaels rehashes briefly the debate as it appeared in numerous tracts between the 1870s and 1900, some in favor of the gold standard, some bimetallist, and a few ultra-radical supporters of fiat money (144-48).

money” (22). This desire of appearing as one *is*, Michaels argues, animates the whole of turn-of-the-century United States society. It is a concern with materiality and its relation to social existence, the search for “a selfhood that consists neither in having a body nor in being a body but in being embodied,” because bodies and appearance have become indistinguishable through monetary exchange (22).

But the homological structure that Michaels here invokes ties itself too neatly together as a simple one-for-one equation between economic discourse and the discourse of subjectivity, which Mark Seltzer has called an “overly hasty historicizatio[n]” (6). For at the same time that the United States was determining the role of the gold standard in its monetary policy, it was also negotiating its new role as an imperial world power, the effects of which “were far wider than anyone has yet imagined,” according to a recent essay by Alfred W. McCoy, Francisco A. Scarano, and Courtney Johnson (3). The expansion of the United States beyond continental North America beginning in the 1890s was as much a question of appearances and materiality as the economic debate occurring at the same time. For as money inched closer to inconvertibility into a standard of value, the United States moved further and further away from its claims to represent the people that supposedly constitute a democracy.⁵

Some questions may arise as a result of this inquiry into the crisis of inconvertibility as experienced in Puerto Rico. For example, if the history of this crisis lies further in the past than United States intervention (as Henna, Zeno Gandía, Hostos suggest), what, if anything, was different in the order of domination instituted by the United States invasion from that of the Spanish empire? Following Michaels’ argument for the relation of naturalism to the crisis of money in the United States, what (literary, subjective) forms were available for processing and

⁵ I am not suggesting that such a state of transparency ever did exist within the United States, only that its claim to verifiability was challenged in a new way by the nature of its colonial presence in Puerto Rico, Hawai’i, the Philippines, and other locations.

experiencing a similar problem in Puerto Rico? And what, ultimately, can literary history contribute to our understanding of these debates?

This chapter takes its cue from the critique of subjectivity as intentionality offered by Kojin Karatani in his reading of Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx. In Karatani's view, capitalism is "is nothing like the economic infrastructure. It is a certain force that regulates humanity beyond its intentionality, a force that divides and recombines human beings. It is a religio-generic entity" (5). Rather than a separation of the cultural and political superstructure from the economic infrastructure—a division of the social totality codified by Friedrich Engels and retained, even while heavily modified, in Althusserian Marxist accounts—Karatani suggests that capitalism is located in the space where collectivities are made from the fragments of subjects, the space *before* the modern subject is constituted. As I will argue, within the context of Puerto Rico in the early twentieth century, it is not sufficient to the analysis of subjectivization that ideologies be examined, if an ideology is here understood to be an "imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" 162). Such a critique already assumes a division between the superstructure and the infrastructure that is hard to maintain in the face of histories of genocide, racial slavery, and colonialism. In the context of empire, the subjectivization of individuals comes about through their movements within circuits of production and consumption, movements which they cannot grasp and whose existence therefore is posited not in a positive relation (as ideology), but constitutes a negativity that continually challenges the subject *as* a singular entity (the location of ideology's effects). The absence of singular subjects on which empire can operate results from

the fetishization of appearance as substance that comes about through the aesthetic-imperial regime of the nineteenth century and its intersubjective underpinnings.⁶

As James T. Siegel has argued, empire is dependent on a “fetish of appearance,” using fetish “in the Hegelian sense of an orientation to a power which cannot be appropriated but which, nonetheless, one feels one possesses” (10). This is how Siegel describes the condition of “natives” in the Dutch West Indies leading up to the Indonesian Revolution of 1945-49. For him, nationalism “domesticates desire, confining it within forms that produce recognition. Before that, however, there is a demand for recognition that is not fully met” (9). Appearance comes to be a form of recognition from the colonial state, but a recognition that produces one *as* what one appears to be, be that landowner, slave, *indio*, or, in another context, “native.” If the colonial state will only recognize one by their appearance, identity is not a matter of being “the product of a self which, knowingly following its own interests, invents itself” (9). Rather it is the product of a series of signifiers without particular signifieds and which have particular effects. Identity in empire substitutes for subjectivity as a “unitary, isolated subject of reflexive representation historically constituted in Cartesian cogitation and monocentric perspective” (Goux, *Symbolic* 120).

If I have been exploring aesthetics in the previous chapters as a regime of imperial power exerted through the written word and manifest in concepts such as “culture” (Chapter Two) and “modernity” (Chapter Three), what I will argue in this chapter is that aesthetics is a discourse of subjectivity, in which identity substitutes for reflexivity. The aesthetic-imperial regime transcodes the subject as (self-)reflection to the subject as socially-recognized identity through the subjection of the self as a sensing unity to the common sense of capitalist reification. The

⁶ For further discussion of the aesthetic-imperial regime as an intersubjective constitution of the subject, see Chapter One, above. For elaboration of Althusser’s theory of the superstructure-infrastructure and its role in forming subjectivity, see Chapter Two.

dismissal of subjects capable of reflective action is the structural force of the modern novel, and is evidenced in Zeno Gandía's 1922 novel, *El negocio*, through generic choices and the representation of money and rumor. As I will argue, this same dismissal is the functional subjective condition that engenders modern empire.

Naturalism and the *Crónicas de un mundo enfermo*

Manuel Zeno Gandía was born in 1855 in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.⁷ From a well-to-do family, Zeno Gandía studied medicine in the colony before being transplanted to Spain to continue his studies. While there, Zeno Gandía began writing plays and poems. The 1860s and '70s—the period when Zeno Gandía was in Europe—was a significant time in narrative fiction in the European continent, seeing the release of Émile Zola's early novels, as well as those of his Spanish contemporary, Benito Pérez Galdós. *Doña Perfecta*, one of Galdós' biggest successes, was released in 1876, the same year that Zeno Gandía returned to Puerto Rico. By the time he had returned to the colony, then, he was bringing back with him an exposure to contemporary European thought on literary matters. Though he began publishing short stories and novellas in Puerto Rico in the 1880s, he is most famous for the first volume in a series of novels collectively known as *Crónicas de un mundo enfermo* (roughly, *Chronicles of a Sick World*, 1894-1925).⁸

In 1870, while Zeno Gandía was still in Spain, the journalist and novelist Benito Pérez Galdós wrote an indictment of the nineteenth-century Spanish novel. Entitled “Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España” (“Observations on the Contemporary Novel in Spain”), the Canary Islands-born writer laments the “elementos extraños, convencionales,

⁷ The information on Zeno Gandía's life is culled from “Breve biografía,” Elena Zeno de Matos, and Aníbal González-Pérez, “Manuel Zeno Gandía.”

⁸ This series, which spanned a great part of Zeno Gandía's adult life, was left unfinished at the time of his death, with a missing fifth novel (*Hubo un escándalo*) and an unfinished fictional manuscript about the Puerto Rican diaspora (*Nueva York*) that are not included in collected editions (González Pérez, “Manuel Zeno Gandía” 322).

impuestos por la moda” (“strange/foreign, conventional elements, imposed by fashion”) that modern writers had been using in place of “los que la sociedad nacional y coetánea les ofrece con extraordinaria abundancia” (“those which contemporary national society offers up with extraordinary abundance”) (115). As he reveals later, these “strange/foreign elements” are a response to lazy readers and a publishing industry that seeks to satisfy their taste for “una distracción fugaz o un pasajero deleite” (“a fugitive distraction or a passing delight”) (115). This type of reader, Galdós continues, is a “peste nacida en Francia” (“plague born in France”) (118), thus equating popular novels and their non-serious reading habits with foreign influences (and not so subtly recalling the French invasion of 1808, of which the manifold effects were still being felt in the last third of the century).

Rather, Galdós would prefer that Spanish writers focus on “la clase media, la más olvidada por nuestros novelistas” (“the middle class, the most forgotten by our novelists”) and in which can be seen “el hombre del siglo XIX con sus virtudes y sus vicios, su noble e insaciable aspiración, su afán de reformas, su actividad pasmosa” (“the man of the nineteenth century with his virtues and vices, his noble and insatiable aspiration, his desire for reforms, his astonishing activity”) (122). Using the customs (“costumbres”; the word is used several times throughout the essay) of the middle class as their content, society’s aspiration will be able to “exteriorizarse” (“to be revealed”), a desire that Galdós sees in the feverish production of *cuadros de costumbres* (124). But the focus of these *cuadros* has been largely limited, Galdós argues, to the popular classes who are “más fácil retratar . . . , porque su colorido es más vivo, su carácter más acentuado, sus costumbres más singulares, y su habla más propia para dar gracia y variedad al estilo” (“easier to depict, because their colorfulness is more lively, their character more accented, their customs more singular, and their speech more appropriate for lending grace and variety to

style”) (121). Unlike the middle classes, whose very position between classes produces them as the embodiment of all strata (at least to Galdós), the lower classes are too distinct, too accented, and too singular. As a result, the production of *cuadros* has limited the ability of writers to manifest the essence of contemporary society by its overemphasis on the distinction of the social strata into particularities. What Galdós seeks is a novel that “pon[e] en contacto y en relación íntima, como están en la vida, todas las clases sociales” (“puts in contact and in intimate relation all the social classes, as they are in life”), a novel that represents the social totality as represented through the struggles of the middle class (121). Of course, Galdós’s article leaves aside the agonized problem that the proliferation of representations of the lower classes was in part the result of the expansion of the middle classes who represented them.⁹ What is more, the audience he condemns as distracted is the same object that he wishes to study, that is, the bourgeoisie. These two problems together demonstrate the ambivalent role of the Galdosian novel, whose intended audience is also the object of its critique.

A similar problem of positionality plagues the unbalanced first novel in Zeno Gandía’s series of novels. The first volume, entitled *La charca* (*The Pond*, 1894)—which is undoubtedly his most famous, and the only one translated into English—takes place in the mountains of Puerto Rico’s interior. *La charca* focuses on a large number of provincial characters, as well as the metropolitan (Iberian) and cosmopolitan (*criollo*) characters that exploit and profit from their labor. As Juan Flores argues, *La charca* is the story of the incommensurability of the two protagonists, Juan del Salto and Silvina, the former a cosmopolitan plantation owner, the latter an impoverished woman who lives on the adjoining estate (“Refiguring *La charca*” 71). Virtually all of the action takes place in the localized setting of the coffee plantations owned by

⁹ See Susan Kirkpatrick and Lucy Harney, as well as my discussion in Chapter Three.

the class to which Juan del Salto belongs and the rural backwater that serves the needs of its workers, allegorized in the pond that provides the title of the novel, *La charca*.

In *La charca*, Juan del Salto's ruminations on the problems that plague Puerto Rico—and its laborers in particular—are set apart in chapters devoted almost exclusively to his philosophizing, while the problems themselves occur separately and generally without his knowledge. For example, the accidental murder of the criminal Deblás by Silvina and her husband, Gaspar, a crime which provides the climax of Silvina's storyline, is never discovered by Juan, and only the rumors of Silvina's repeated rape at the hands of Gaspar and the landowner Galante ever make it back to Juan. Thus when the literary critic Zilkie Janer says of Juan that he "is full of ideas to improve peasant life but considers himself powerless to implement them" (21), she overlooks the fact that Juan is not even aware of the real problems that peasants such as Silvina face. In the first novel of the series, then, the reflections of wealthy *criollos* in the plantations are rendered useless through their distance from the activities of those on whom they depend.

The third novel of Zeno Gandía's *Crónicas*,¹⁰ *El negocio* (*The Business*), was probably begun in the late 1890s, when Puerto Rico was under Spanish dominion, but it was not published until 1922, twenty-four years after the United States invasion.¹¹ In this installment, the distance represented between social strata in *La charca* is collapsed in the commercial center of Ponce, a port city on the southern side of the island of Puerto Rico.¹² Between the three storylines that

¹⁰ The second is 1896's *Garduña* (*Marten*), which I do not discuss here.

¹¹ Janer suggests that *El negocio* was written in the brief window of Puerto Rican Autonomy under the Spanish Empire (1897-98) (Janer 99 n. 30). The novel, which is set under Spanish colonial rule, was likely revised before publication, and some critiques of colonialism present in the novel seem as likely to have been developed by Zeno Gandía during its writing and later incorporated into his career as a Commissioner in 1899 as to have developed from that very career. In my view, the date of composition remains open to debate.

¹² This turn to the coastal regions of Puerto Rico is a new fold on Ileana M. Rodríguez-Silva's critique of the liberal projects that "ignored the slavery/sugar cultures of the coast in their imagining of the nation" (73). In fact, the transition from the coffee cultivation in the interior in *La charca* to the import-export trade on the coast in *El*

dominate the novel, characters interact and mingle from the lower classes (poor orphans, prostitutes, and impoverished urban blacks), the middle classes (petty clerks), and the upper classes (shipping magnates, wealthy artists, and rentiers). Here everyone seems to know everything about everyone, as information circulates in networks of rumors that even traverse the Atlantic, as fast and as uncertain as the money with which trade is conducted.

The storyline to which the largest number of pages is devoted centers on a young orphan named Sergio Madrid as he seeks to woo his boss's daughter, Clarita Andújar. Clarita's father, Pánfilo, who appears as a miserly merchant in *La charca*, wishes Clarita would marry a wealthier suitor, Alberto Rosaldez. Clarita, who is in love with Sergio, manages to evade the first wedding attempted by her father with Rosaldez, and submits to a plan by Sergio to be smuggled aboard a ship bound for Europe. They are married *en route*, settle in Paris, and are eventually followed by Clarita's parents. This storyline ends approximately three-quarters of the way through the novel.

The second most developed storyline, which occupies the greater chunk of the final quarter, narrates the bankruptcy of a *criollo* merchant (of Spanish descent but born in Puerto Rico), Leopoldo Amor, whose meteoric rise in the import-export trade is followed by an almost equally precipitous collapse. Leopoldo borrows money from his ex-girlfriend, his friends, and, finally, from the shared fund bequeathed to him and his half-brother, the Spanish-born Gastón. Gastón's first voyage to the colony where his brother was born is made to demand his share of the inheritance, at both his and Leopoldo's darkest hour.

negocio represents a broader economic shift away from small peasant holdings alongside large *haciendas*, organized around the exportation of coffee to Spain (Dietz 99-102). However, as I intend to show, the suspicion towards the commercial and monetary economy of Ponce is an extension of the fear over "a failed colonial economic system" and the racial mixing on which it was based (Rodríguez-Silva 73). It is notable that the aim of Zeno Gandía's critique is the trade of coastal commodities and not their production, which is never depicted in *El negocio* as it had been in *La charca*. For the relationship of political economy to racial mixing in Puerto Rico, see my Chapter Two.

The third storyline, which occupies the fewest number of pages, centers on the life and death of Pánfilo Andújar's business partner, Galante. Galante, who appears as an *hacendero* and rapist in *La charca*, is by this point quite wealthy and living with a mixed-race woman named Pasión. Pasión, who was coerced into the relationship by her brother and mother, is pregnant with Rosaldez's child, which she tries to convince Galante is his, in order to receive his wealth when the latter dies. Galante, who is the father of an unknown number of children across the island, dies about halfway through the novel, but the inheritance is contested by one of his illegitimate children. Pasión and her brother decide to steal the money during the wake, although they make off with only a portion of it.

Zeno Gandía's work is frequently compared to that of Émile Zola, the great French writer whose novels are often taken to be models of naturalist style. It will be worthwhile to define, if only provisionally, what I take to be "naturalism" in the Zola vein, in order to trace the influences on Zeno Gandía's style, and, through that, to track the convergence of forces that animate colonial literature at the time. Based on Zola's essay "Le Roman expérimental" ("The Experimental Novel") (1880), naturalism in Zola can be understood as the extension of the scientific method onto the terrain of the social. Borrowing from the experimental method as expounded by Claude Bernard, Zola calls novelists "the examining magistrates of men and their passions" (10), whose goal is to "poin[t] out in man and in society the mechanism of the phenomena over which science is mistress and who does not interpose his personal sentiments, except in the phenomena whose determinism is not yet settled, and who tries to test, as much as he can, this personal sentiment, this idea apriori, by observation and experiment" (53-54). Such a novel, David Baguley has argued, would produce "a literature purged of literariness" (16), in that the objects of inquiry are no longer to yield to the author, but to stand independent of him or her

and be observed. If the relationship between Silvina and Juan in *La charca* can be seen to embody this fixing of the author in observer status and a purging of authorial intentionality, could not Zeno Gandía's sixteen-year silence in the realm of fiction before *El negocio* be explained by his turn to political and journalistic discourse "purged" of its literariness?¹³

Curiously, though Zeno Gandía's sojourn in Spain coincided with the rise to prominence of the generation of writers of whom Galdós is representative, according to Gilbert Darbouze, the Puerto Rican writer had left Spain before the word "naturalism" had even entered literary debates in the Peninsula. Darbouze claims, citing earlier work by Walter Pattison, that "les écrivains espagnols, contemporains de Zola, omettent de mentionner le mot 'naturalisme' dans leurs œuvres jusqu'en 1879, utilisant toujours les termes 'realista' et 'realismo' dans leur analyse ou leur critique des romans naturalistes" ("Spanish writers, contemporaries of Zola, did not mention the word 'naturalism' in their work until 1879, always using the terms 'realista' and 'realismo' in their analysis and criticism of naturalist novels") (3). To compound the ambiguity of studying "naturalism" in Zeno Gandía's texts, Eamonn Rodgers has argued that "even those writers [in Spanish] most amenable to the influence of naturalism maintained an eclectic and independent attitude toward the movement" (132), citing the moral and religious themes in work by Galdós and Emilia Pardo Bazán as evidence. Whether or not Zeno Gandía had a conscious intention to produce "naturalist" works, then, might be open to debate.¹⁴

I am not here denying the influence of and participation in the discourse of naturalism in the texts of Zeno Gandía. After all, he opens *La charca* with a passage from a novel by Zola, *Le*

¹³ The silence is closer to twenty-eight years if calculated based on composition dates, and if it is assumed that *El negocio* was composed closer to its publication date than Janer assumes. This is because *Garduña*, the second novel in the *Crónicas*, was written before *La charca*, although not published until two years after.

¹⁴ Darbouze, for his part, attempts to demonstrate the similarities between the work of Zeno Gandía and Zola in order to argue for the mediating influence of Spain on the former's output.

Docteur Pascal, which had appeared only the previous year (1893).¹⁵ Rather, the question is whether Zeno Gandía's body of writings can or should be included under the label "naturalism." Zeno Gandía is often lumped under the term, with *La charca* becoming central to these discussions. Symptomatically, Sabine Schlickers, in her study of Latin American naturalism, notes that her analysis "se concentra en *La charca*, reconocida como la novela más naturalista de Zeno Gandía" ("concentrates on *La charca*, recognized as the most naturalist novel of Zeno Gandía") and cites three other critics to support this claim (170). As Janer argues, *La charca*'s critical centrality is based on its being "in line with the European naturalist form," while the other novels in his series "are heavy with allegory or . . . insist on reconstructing a past that has happily been overcome" (16). But categorizing in this fashion and subsuming *La charca* under narratives of diffusion leaves out both the circumspection that Zeno Gandía expresses towards naturalism¹⁶ and the particular historical situation of Puerto Rico itself as a colony.

If naturalism is expressive of the idea that nature is determinant of historical development, with this development subject to the patterns of growth and decay present in nature,¹⁷ it would be possible to argue that it is an outgrowth in Puerto Rico of the racialist ideas of nineteenth-century liberal discourse that I discussed in Chapter Two. Zeno Gandía's texts would then be a development of a particularly Puerto Rican problematic, as is argued by Janer and Ileana M. Rodríguez-Silva. In contrast to this, the earlier literary history of Francisco Manrique Cabrera contends the "Europeanness" of Zeno Gandía's naturalism. The node in this formal morphology

¹⁵ This quotation is not included in the *Obras completas* edition from the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, but is mentioned (accompanied by a translation in Spanish) in Sabine Schlickers (178) and included (in English translation) in the Kal Wagenheim translation of *La charca* (33).

¹⁶ Luis Felipe Díaz notes how this appears in rhetorical similarity to the elitist politics of *La charca*: "Si hay ironía satírica hacia algunos personajes abyectos, . . . como también hay parodia hacia el propio naturalismo y sus pretensiones científicas" ("There is satirical irony towards a few abject persons, just as there is parody towards naturalism itself and its scientific pretensions") (20). As Díaz centers his deconstructionist study on *La charca*, its utility to this project is limited.

¹⁷ Richard Lehan notes several discourses of nature as mechanisms that determine human life in naturalist writings, such as biology and cosmology.

is, once again, Emilia Pardo Bazán, who, in *La cuestión palpitante* (*The Palpitating Question*), would accept “ciertos elementos del naturalismo, pero rechazar[ía] otros como: el determinismo científico o el valor utilitario de la novela. Se trata de un naturalismo bastante a medias si no a tercias” (“certain elements of naturalism, but would reject others, such as scientific determinism and the utilitarian value of the novel. It is a naturalism by half-measure, if not by thirds”) (Cabrera 182-83). Zeno’s style, Cabrera continues, is “un poco lo mismo” (“a bit the same”), something like “un realismo un poco más riguroso” (“a rather more rigorous realism”) (183). Cabrera thus sees Zeno Gandía as a derivative of European novelistic developments.

Instead of being a half (or third) of European naturalism, it might be productive to inquire into Zeno Gandía’s style not as European-derived, but as a development of colonial culture, influenced by the European literature with which he was surely familiar, but ultimately responding to the needs of a particular stratum of Puerto Ricans.¹⁸ Zeno Gandía’s novelistics might, then, be seen as a nodal point in exchanges between Puerto Rico and the wider world, their own positing of a world of movement and influences. *El negocio*, the third volume in the *Crónicas*, and the first published after the United States seized control of the colony, is, as much as anything, a meditation on colonialism and the imperial movement of merchandise and ideas. It is a mapping of capitalism at the turn of the twentieth century, including its imperial inequalities and irrationalities.

¹⁸ Heather Arvidson has also pointed out to me the similarities in plot and characterization of *El negocio* to William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. I am not disputing that Zeno Gandía may have called on European literature in the production of his novel. Rather, I am arguing for the situating of the novel within the particularities of Puerto Rican colonial history in the contemporary moment. This must include, of course, the influences of both Europe and the United States.

As to whether or not Spain can be included in “Europe” at this time (a concern of Pascale Casanova, and, for a slightly earlier period, Michael Iarocci), it was, at the very least, a more “core” country within global literary culture, as demonstrated by Galdós’ call for an autochthonous literature in “Observaciones” and his subsequent development of such during the period that Zeno Gandía was training in medicine in the metropole.

The main street for business transactions in the city of Ponce, as represented in the novel, is the “calle del Mar” (“Ocean Street”) which does, in fact, face the sea. The narrator highlights the sea’s movements as if it were a description of the colony itself: “En la orilla el oleaje determinaba asaltos intermitentes: de la suma de varias olas formábase una más grande que rodaba por la arenisca y reventaba para alfombrar de espumas la colina de ribazo” (“On the shore, the swells of water defined themselves in intermittent assaults: a larger wave would form from the sum of multiple smaller ones, and would roll over the sandstone, crashing and covering the steep bank with spray”) (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 91)¹⁹ The mounting waves are immediately paralleled by the crisis of consumption that grips the colony, a passage that deserves a lengthy quotation:

En el tinglado apilábanse montones de frutos y mercancías. Por aquel sitio las necesidades y la costumbre habían establecido una densa corriente comercial. El genio del negocio impulsaba desde ultramar la fuerza de esa corriente, inundando de productos de toda especie la colonia. Una tierra fértil bajo un sol meteorizante, obligaba a pedir al mundo exterior lo que ella fecunda y pródiga podía producir. El extranjero había encontrado en ella ancho embudo. Por él desaguaba sus productos abriendo cauce a un torrente mercantil impuesto por las exigencias geográficas y por el imprevisor regateo arancelario que entre las provincias de la nación un egoísmo fratricida había hecho ley. (92)

(In the shed, mounds of fruit and merchandise were heaped high. Necessity and custom had established a heavy commercial current through that area. The genie of commerce pushed the force of this current from across the sea, inundating the colony with all manner of products. A fertile soil beneath a fecundating sun,

¹⁹ Translations from *El negocio* are my own, with assistance from Cynthia Steele.

obliged to beg the exterior world for what she, ripe and prodigious, could produce herself. The foreigner had found in her an ample funnel for draining off such products, opening a channel for the mercantile torrent imposed by geographical exigencies and the improvident haggling over tariffs that a fratricidal egotism had made the law between the nation's provinces.)

Exchange here is poeticized through maritime vocabulary (“corriente,” “inundando,” “desaguaba,” “cauce,” “torrente”), physiologized through medical vocabulary (“meteorizante”), and technologized through the discourse of fluid dynamics (“embudo”). This maritime exchange with the rest of the nation, however, siphons off the fertility of the soil and replaces its produce with merchandise from afar, which piles up in seaside warehouses rather than being evenly distributed back across the land. The extremes of agriculture seem to be the best analogies for the colonial situation, with droughts and floods of products caused by the funnel (“embudo”) of colonial policy.

The dissipated figure of Camilo Cerdán, then, may be seen as symptomatic of the bottlenecking of intellectual energy that historian Salvador Brau called the “comercio intelectual” (“intellectual commerce”) that circulates across the Atlantic space (Brau, in Alonso vi). Camilo abandons practical affairs for the sake of reading, a sign of his remove from necessity. “Si a un mismo tiempo le solicitaban un folleto filosófico y un saco de patatas,” the narrator says of Camilo, “sentábase sobre éste para leer aquél” (“If he was asked simultaneously for a philosophical pamphlet and a sack of potatoes, . . . he would sit on the latter in order to read the former”) (22). An excess of intellectual achievement, the figure of Camilo suggests, will starve the Puerto Rican population while they sit on a wealth of nutrition. The practical energies of the population are expended in the fruitless production of philosophers such as Camilo, who,

it should be pointed out, lives off the rents generated by inherited properties and not by his own efforts.

Though Camilo's dissipation and inactivity recall the biological models that animated naturalism, his centrality to the movement of each of the three plots suggests something other than naturalism's determinism. In fact, Zeno Gandía seems to provide a clue towards how he conceived of his novels generically *not* as naturalist. The title of the series of novels to which *El negocio* belongs claims a family resemblance²⁰ to another genre central to Latin American letters during the *fin del siglo*: the *crónica*.

Despite the resurgent popularity of the *crónica* as an object of study, little attention has been given to the use of this genre-specific word in Zeno Gandía's oeuvre. Even laudatory appraisals of *La charca* call the plot "as meandering as the course of a mountain stream" (González-Pérez, "Manuel Zeno Gandía" 323). However, if the novels are to be taken as befitting the title given to them, such "meandering" may be less stylistic—or worse, defective—than generic. Though the narrator does not appear in Zeno Gandía's novels as a character, the perspective brought to bear on events in *El negocio* follows an itinerary reminiscent of the chronicler's stroll as described by Julio Ramos (126-36), in large part through the figure of Camilo. Camilo plays a pivotal role in each of the three storylines: arranging Sergio and Clarita's flight, advising Leopoldo about how to escape his debts (with only marginal success), and discovering the theft of Galante's fortune (when the illegitimate son who had been chasing Pasión's brother to recover the money falls into Camilo's yard). Throughout the novel, Camilo retains a skeptical attitude toward money, patria, and politics, and is even given the final line of the novel, delivered after a fistfight between the two half-brothers, Leopoldo and Gastón, is broken up and the two are placed on separate boats headed away from Ponce: "¡Sabe el cielo

²⁰ On the notion of genre as "family resemblance," see Wai Chee Dimock, "Genre" (86-87).

sobre qué rostro caerán las bofetadas de lo porvenir...!” (“Heaven alone knows which face will receive the blows of the future...!”) (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 425).

In his perceived centrality to the novel, Camilo resembles a bit the figure of Juan del Salto in *La charca*. The plantation owner of that novel, Flores contends, “bears so much of the intellectual weight of *La charca*, and so strongly suggests its author,” that “[h]is words and thoughts are often quoted [by critics] as those of Zeno Gandía himself” (“Refiguring *La charca*” 73). This attribution—which Flores rejects—is also made for Camilo in *El negocio*, such that Arlyn Sánchez de Silva avers uncritically that Camilo is the “vocalizador del pensamiento de Zeno Gandía” (“vocalizer of Zeno Gandía’s thoughts”) (98). The equation seems even stranger in *El negocio* than in *La charca*, since, unlike the stately if aloof figure of Juan del Salto, Camilo is depicted as an alcoholic, “un buen criollo lleno de teorías, perplejo ante la acción” (“a good *criollo* full of theories, perplexed in the face of action”), as the narrator of *El negocio* says (22).

The later novel’s primary location of Ponce was, at the turn of the twentieth century, about equal in size to the seat of colonial government, San Juan. The southern port had, according to César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, “emerged as the site of an increasingly self-conscious *criollo* culture, liberal, freethinking, avid for more intense material and spiritual contact with the perceived centers of modern culture” (19). It is also, in Zeno Gandía’s description, a fine example of the utopia and catastrophe that Ramos sees in the descriptions of *modernista* chroniclers (118). But while the fragmentation of the urban experience is turned, for Rubén Darío and Enrique Gómez Carrillo, into a consumerist rhetoric through the stroll (*pace* Ramos), for Zeno Gandía this *modernista* rendering of society is achieved through the movement of the *vapor*, or steamship. Take, as an example, a transition between scenes in Chapter Six. While the chapter begins with the orphan prostitute Lupe convincing Sergio not to kill himself, after his

beloved Clarita's wedding was supposed to have taken place, the narrator ends the scene as follows: "Todavía por algún tiempo agotaron los jóvenes el idilio y cuando saliendo de la playa, perdiéronse entre los mangles, pudieron ver cómo la mole del vapor Ebro se movía en la sombra y cómo, emprendiendo la marcha, salía del puerto" ("The youths continued in this exhausted idyll for some time and when they left the beach, disappearing among the mangroves, they could see the bulk of the steamship Ebro moving in the shadows and, launching itself on its way, leaving the port") (Zeno Gandía 187-88). The following paragraph begins abruptly with: "Al día siguiente llegó Andújar de muy mal humor a su oficina" ("The following day, Andújar came into the office in a very bad humor") (188). The steamship Ebro, whose leaving from port was meant to coincide with the wedding of Andújar's daughter Clarita, until the wedding was postponed, moves in place of the movement of the narrator, shifting focus from Clarita's bereft lover to her father. Maritime circulation is thus the primary motivation of the narrative, overtaking the individual storylines of characters. Ramos locates the modern subject of the *crónica* in the "figure that contains the city's image [as an abundance of commodities] behind a glass window" (128). Zeno Gandía, by contrast, emphasizes the circulation of commodities to the denigration of subjectivity's ability to determine action. As in Georg Lukács' discussion of reification, mentioned in Chapter One, in *El negocio* the individual subject only perceives him- or herself as the focal point of multiple alien forces producing history in the place of human agency. But—and here is where Zola and Zeno Gandía *do* meet—human society is the result of a calculable dynamism that exists in capitalism itself, what Richard Lehan has called "the biology of economics" (146).

As a result, perspective, as the subjectification of the individual agent, seems to conflict with capitalist modernity as much as it seems to conflict with the conditions of the colonies

under imperialism. In Zeno Gandía's novel, this takes the form of Sergio Madrid and his courting of Clarita Andújar. Frustrated by Pánfilo Andújar's determination to marry his daughter off to Rosaldez, Sergio develops a plot to secret Clarita away and to marry her in another Caribbean island, St. Thomas, then a colony of the Danish.²¹ His development of this plan, however, reveals his lack of agency in the face of Peninsular exigency in Puerto Rico, a lack that is shared by Pánfilo Andújar's wife and daughter.

In contriving his plan with his friend, Camilo, Sergio reveals an alienated position to his own agency. When Camilo proposes to take Sergio's plans into his own hands, Sergio replies, "[e]n estos momentos no puedo decir que por mi iniciativa voy, sino que *me llevan* las circunstancias" ("in these moments, I cannot say that *I go* of my own initiative, but that *I am carried* along by circumstances") (264, italics in original). This enunciatory position that Sergio inhabits is compelled by outside circumstances, or feels itself to be, at least, much as the alienated subject discussed by Lukács. However, Sergio is not alienated by his relation to the labor process; Sergio, as a clerk in the house of Andújar y Galante, is more petit bourgeois than proletarian. Rather, Sergio—or the perspective that is named Sergio in the novel—is alienated by the machinations of *el negocio*, of business, that is, of the trade that dominates the city of Ponce, as well as by the Peninsular interests, represented by the metropolitan-born Andújar, that control this trade. But the alienated figure of Sergio is the product not only of the circuits through which capital flows, but also of the social world that it inhabits, a social world that, it turns out, is structured on rumor.

²¹ In traveling to Paris via St. Thomas, Sergio, under Camilo's direction, follows part of an itinerary set earlier by the Puerto Rican revolutionary, Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, after the failed Lares Rebellion of 1868. See Anderson's account of Betance's voyages in *Under Three Flags* (184-89). Betances figures directly in Zeno Gandía's novel, as I discuss below.

Rumors in the Colony

Leopoldo's half-brother, Gastón, who was born in and has spent his whole life in Spain, is a naturalist painter. He is “devoto de la copia de la vida real como suprema síntesis de la belleza” (“devoted to the copy of real life as the supreme synthesis of beauty”) (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 271). His belief in the beauty of nature derives from its existence as real, and he desires that his paintings have the kind of life that the landscapes he represents have (338). While living in a hotel in Monaco, he paints a landscape so vividly that it earns him a prize at a festival in Venice, where he sells a large number of his other canvases (338-39). In the success of these works there is a liveliness that mimics the reality of that which they represent. Art, for Zeno Gandía, is mimesis, a transposing of real life into its own copy. Like a chain of deferrals, the real becomes art through beauty, which leads, ultimately, to money. These landscapes have provided Gastón with a certain credit, extending and transforming their value to him from their “art value” (quantified as “beauty”) to “financial value” (quantified as “money”). The credit that nature provides Gastón is quickly ruined, however, by his reckless gambling, a fault that is described, with recourse to the vocabulary of naturalism, as a “bestia dormida en el fondo” (“beast sleeping at his core”)²² and “un apocalíptico egoísmo” (“an apocalyptic egoism”) that causes him to lose “el dominio sobre sí mismo” (“dominion over himself”) (341). Thus the nature of man, when unleashed, ruins the credit that nature extends to man, from which he can only benefit if he exerts control over himself.

This economy of nature is refracted in the narrative of Leopoldo, Gastón's brother, as “el gran crédito que [Leopoldo] llegó a gozar” (“the great credit that Leopoldo came to enjoy”)

²² Once again, the *fondo* appears as antithetical to the superficialities, just as in Emilia Pardo Bazán's criticism, discussed in Chapter Three. If, for Pardo Bazán, the *fondo* held the essence of reality, for Zeno Gandía that reality is biological animality.

among the populace of Ponce begins to crumble as a result of a few setbacks (337). Leopoldo, too, suffers a crisis of authenticity as a result of credit economies. But while Leopoldo, in order to staunch the flow of too much credit gone bad, does everything he can think of—including the use of his and Gastón’s inheritance to pay business expenses—Gastón is depicted as inattentive to the concerns of daily life or financial well-being (the two are not always distinct in *El negocio*). The painting that gains him a momentary financial respite was created after Gastón fled Spain, due to heavy losses in the stock market. He then spends four months in a hotel in Monaco, largely idle. It is only at the end of this extravagant vacation that Gastón justifies (if it can be called that) his profligacy by creating the painting that would win him acclaim and fortune in Venice. Gastón’s search for the “real” through painting, then, is premised on the superficiality of finance, a superficiality that is exposed as much by his stock-market speculations as by his beast-like gambling. What is more, the “real” that Gastón wishes to paint seems itself to be exposed as fraudulent, as is revealed when Gastón, analyzing his own failures, tells himself that he is a “desconocedor de la realidad” (“person incapable of knowing reality”) (342). The prize-winning painting, too, reveals the irreality of Gastón’s grasp of value, as it contains a representation of the very Monte Carlo casino in which he would later lose his fortune. The metonymic presence of the casino in his landscape suggests a false set of values buried within his artistic production.

In *El negocio*, credit operates in this contradictory, though all-too-real, way. Once Leopoldo’s debts start to mount, his credit, likewise, dries up. Though this is typical of financial crises in capitalist economies,²³ Zeno Gandía depicts it not as a crisis of faith in future return, but as a crisis of trust among peers in a single community. When the population of Ponce comes to

²³ The global financial crisis that began in 2008 is but the most recent reminder of this. On capital flow and crisis, see David Harvey. For a metaphor of the monetary inflow that risks crisis-level outflow, see Pheng Cheah, “Crises of Money.”

believe that Leopoldo may have siphoned off money from his business and stashed it in an English bank (though this belief is not true), the businessmen and clerks who meet in the *cafetín* for drinks circulate rumors as to Leopoldo's honesty: "Desde las más importantes personas a las más humildes, creíanse todos con derecho a dar opinión, asegurando Leopoldo que sin ella [la cuestión de fondos ocultos] hubieran marchado las cosas mejor. Eran muchos los consejeros; el caído uno solo" ("From the most important persons to the humblest, everyone believed themselves to have the right to an opinion, assuring Leopoldo that without the question [of secret funds], everything would have turned out for the better. There were many counselors; one alone would fall") (404). This scene is remarkable for its depiction of the social form of capitalism itself, as well as for the terrible consequences that it entails. What unites the habitués of the *cafetín* here is their speculation over Leopoldo's fate, rendering a collectivity out of the diverse social strata through the unanimity of their judgment about Leopoldo, the secret funds, and their supposed role in Leopoldo's crisis. Galdós's desired novel of the social totality here comes to fruition in the collectivity created through rumor. This collectivity, however, is ephemeral, as evidenced by the individualization that has occurred in singling out Leopoldo from themselves. If the fallen one is "one alone," it is not because he is unique amongst those who have become "counselors," but because he is the object of their collective attention. As the object of rumor, he is marked off, and, by marking him off, they ward themselves off from the risk in which they operate daily and that contributes to Leopoldo's fall. Galdós's "hombre del siglo XIX" ("man of the nineteenth century") (122), it appears, is one who creates society through his individualization and the role that this process plays in producing social collectivities.

Here, the paradox of the market economy is clear, as is its relation to the public world of rumor. Vicente Rafael has said that rumors are "commonplace in wartime and other moments

when authority comes under severe crisis. They substitute for and so displace ‘truth’ in the sense of a consensual, officially sanctioned version of the way things are” (“Anticipating Nationhood” 116). Because rumors thrive outside of authoritative channels of information, “rumors point to the possible unfolding of history and circulation of power elsewhere, at a tangent to the present trajectory of events” (117). Rumor thus appears at the juncture between subjects that is unmediated by state control, religious authority, or patriarchal power. Like commodities in a market economy, the value of rumor is established through the overcoming of its purely subjective power and its exchange with another subject.²⁴

The problem is—as with money—that the false and the real circulate equally. What matters in these instances is the faith, the *credit*, placed in the bearer (of rumor or of money). Jacques Derrida, discussing a short story by Charles Baudelaire called “La Fausse monnaie” (“Counterfeit Money”), claims that

the story is, perhaps, counterfeit money (*perhaps*: the *perhaps* remains essential here because, in order for there to be counterfeit money, the counterfeit money must not give itself *with certainty* to be counterfeit money; and this *perhaps* is also the intentional dimension, that is, the *credit*, the act of faith that structures all money, all experience or all consciousness of money, be it true or false). (*Given Time* 95, italics in original)

As with the story “La Fausse monnaie” and its putative object, counterfeit money, rumor operates not as the truth, but as the possibility of a truth, as an act of credit that, through the (in)credulity of the listener, acts as (non-)truth.

Rumor, then, like money, is at its base (*fondo*, in Spanish) a form of credit. In *El negocio*, the *fondo* of colonial society, as “base,” “fund,” and “background” for action, is impossible to

²⁴ On money’s ability to “objectify” social relations, see Simmel 79.

discern in itself. Faith and credit come to the fore as the most reliable way for imperial subjects to enframe the colony.²⁵ This credit that enframes is, likewise, essential to fictional narrative, particularly the novel, which relies on the development of a sense of time and place in which simultaneous actions can and must be thought as potentialities harbored in the descriptive background.

In the question of Leopoldo's finances, "creaíanse todos con derecho a dar opinión" ("everyone believed themselves to have the right to an opinion"), equalizing the social differences in the collectivity with which they appear as rumor. The appearance of the rumor thus coincides with the collectivization of individual interests as well as the separation of individuals from the rumor itself. No one gives *their own* opinion; rather, everyone gives *an* opinion (which happens to be the same as everyone else's). Because no one is responsible for the rumor itself, the rumor denies referentiality to real events and materials. The reality of secret funds does not matter to the circulation of the rumor of their existence, but the mere "cuestión de supuestos fondos ocultos" ("question of supposed secret funds") causes it to circulate (404). Likewise, when Gastón finally enters the colony and visits the *cafetín*, he is "un hombre que siendo desconocido conocíale todo el mundo" ("a man who, being unknown, was known to everybody") (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 405). Gastón's very anonymity determines his identity, just as the "supposed secret funds" are given a social truth through the possibility of their existence.

But for the rumor to gain currency, it is not enough that the object of rumor *might* exist. It must be shared, it must become collectivized. The collectivization of the rumor is what lends it credibility (whose etymological root is "belief," "credence," as with "credit" itself). This occurs

²⁵ I use "enframing" here in the manner that Martin Heidegger discusses it in "The Question Concerning Technology," as a "challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing [of nature] as standing-reserve" (19).

through its circulation, in the *cafetín* as well as the colony, and even trans-Atlantically, as is the case with Gastón, who heard of his brother's theft while still in Spain. In circulating, the rumor comes to have effects, in that the news of "supposed secret funds" brings Gastón to the colony and instigates a fight between him and Leopoldo. These are effects for which the cause is illusory or fictive, and Zeno Gandía suggests throughout that the negative effects of these objects that circulate without reference to reality predominate in market economies.

This, then, is a message similar to that located by Ericka Beckman in the so-called "stock market novels" of the turn of the twentieth century. In her discussion of the Argentinian stock market novel *La bolsa*, Beckman argues that it "wants us to believe that the 'fictitiousness' of wealth is an aberration under capitalist economies and that it can be banished. This very act of banishing. . . relies on the introduction of new fictions," i.e. the stock market novels themselves (120). Ultimately, Beckman continues, money "is fiction," a truth that "is not grasped by banishing its fantastic elements, but rather in preserving chimera as its state of normalcy" (120). Zeno Gandía, in the face of the fictionality of money, offers a fiction to replace money, art as a substitute, even though art itself is dependent on the same social form as money: the objectivity (intersubjectivity) of value achieved through what Marc Shell has called "the interaction between economic and aesthetic symbolization and production" (*Art and Money* 4). But Zeno Gandía does, on some level, recognize this "chimera" as the natural state, for, as the narrator says, "[a]lgo hay en esos negocios que sin ser sobrenatural es sobrehumano" ("there is something in this business that, without being supernatural, is superhuman") (*El negocio* 220). Thus it is not that the fiction of money can be banished in *El negocio*, but that it must not be thought that it is human. Rather it is a force in (of?) nature that strips humans of their humanity, renders them nodes in networks of credit and rumor.

In so doing, it also calls into question the omniscient narration of the novel. The centrality to the plot of rumor—with its ambiguous relation to the purported object of its focus—serves to expose the absurdity of narration as an act of closure. The narrator knows all, it would seem. But only up to a point. By the end of the novel, neither the narrator nor the reader knows whether Sergio and Clarita will ever return to the colony, whether the revolution that Camilo is funding will be successful, or who will receive the next blow. Closure is left outside of the narrative proper.

Patriarchy and Money Sickness

If, in the colony, subjective will and narrative closure are not available to a colonial petit bourgeois such as Sergio,²⁶ to what do we attribute this blockage? Is it the moment of capitalist modernity as discussed by Lukács (see Chapter One, above)? Of imperial control? Or is it of both moments simultaneously and equally? The conflation of the two becomes clear in the response of Andújar's wife, Filomena, to the successful elopement of the *criollo* couple, Clarita and Sergio. Having been dealt a fatal blow to “la honra de su hija” (“the honor of her daughter”) (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 299), Filomena reveals that, all along, she has scorned Pánfilo's attempt to marry Clarita off to a suitor, merely due to the latter's wealth. “Andújar: no has sido buen padre,” she accuses, “[h]e ahí tu obra Andújar; he ahí a donde nos condujo el *negocio* del casamiento de nuestra pobre hija” (“Andújar: you have not been a good father. . . Here is your handiwork, Andújar; here is where the *business* of our poor daughter's marriage has led us”) (299, italics in original). In Filomena's accusations is revealed the equation of Peninsular labor

²⁶ It should be noted that Camilo, inheritor of a large sum when he was orphaned as a child, invested his money in a merchant house that failed through a lack of “actividad, método en la máquina del trabajo, laboriosidad y firmeza de propósito” (“activity, method in the machinery of work, laboriousness and firmness of purpose”) (22). Camilo is thus of a distinct class from the also-orphaned Sergio, who labors—albeit intellectually—for his bread.

with *obra*, that is, the “[c]osa hecha o producida por un agente” (“something made or produced by an agent”) according to the Real Academia Española. According to Filomena, Clarita’s fate is neither the result of her own agency nor that of her lover, Sergio; it is *obra* only of the Peninsular “agente,” Andújar, which invokes not only his ability to act, but his profession as an *agente comercial* (businessman). What is more, it is an *obra* that is brought about through his making a “business” of his daughter’s marriage, of trafficking in her as a commodity.²⁷ (*Obra* is, of course, also the term equivalent to “work,” as in “a work of art” or a “work of fiction,” as well as the labor required in the fabrication of such.)

This traffic, to Filomena, is the work of the Peninsular agent, who “desconoc[e] el corazón de la mujer y [niega] sus derechos a [su] hija” (“doesn’t know women’s hearts and denies his daughter her rights”) (299). Filomena’s vision of Andújar’s control over his daughter’s life, however, falls into the type of thinking rejected by Neferti Tadiar, which represents women as oppressed objects of male action, failing to recognize “the role of the subjective activity, that is, the experience of objectified women, in the making of the abstract systems—the very order of exchange—that appear to regulate their lives” (*Things* 37). Following this, the “agentless” actions of Sergio and Clarita must be seen in a different light. Zeno Gandía’s portrayal of these colonial subjectivities as flotsam irrevocably moved by colonial tides begins to look like one of the “teorías” (“theories”) forever floating through Camilo’s head and which render him “perplejo ante la acción” and “pesimista” (“perplexed in the face of action” and “pessimistic”) (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 22). One might even go so far as to say that, in his portrayal of Sergio and Clarita’s relationship as a victim of patriarchal and imperial exigency, Zeno Gandía is inculcating “la colonia, la humanidad, el mundo,” “todo, menos él” (“the colony, humanity, the

²⁷ Gayle Rubin’s essay, “The Traffic in Women,” stands as a foundational critique of the role of exchange in the production of what she calls the “sex/gender system,” or the equation of biological sex with gender presentation. As I will discuss below, such thinking is a convenient allegory for Zeno Gandía that founders on its own self-evidence.

world,” “everything, except himself”) (22). This resembles Camilo’s attitude toward his own business reversals. The problem that Zeno Gandía sees here is a product of his own making, as the subjectivity that he privileges and desires for Sergio is the possibility for self-reflexive action that is structurally denied to fictional characters by definition. The naturalist novel that sought to rid the author of his responsibility in dictating action bumps up against the *crónica*’s consuming subject of the urban stroll.

The remedy that *El negocio* offers for this patriarchal-imperial illness reinscribes much the same pattern of hierarchization found in the original problem. Fleeing from Andújar on the Europe-bound ship on which Clarita and Rosaldez were meant to take their honeymoon, Sergio assumes the identity of Rosaldez and uses the passage paid in advance by Clarita’s father in order to escape his authority. Upon discovering their flight, Andújar rages that it had been achieved “¡con mis propios medios, con mi propio dinero, [Sergio] me la roba [Clarita]!” (“with my own means, with my own money, Sergio has robbed me of Clarita!”) (302). This highlights the surreptitious transfer of values and authority. Sergio uses Andújar’s money as a means to “rob” him of his “property,” a theft of value made worse by the potential exchangeability that Clarita embodies. In what Gayle Rubin called the “political economy of sex” (61), Clarita, to Andújar, is a holder of value that can be transferred in order to augment (by marrying her to Rosaldez) or depreciate (by her “theft” by Sergio) wealth. Pánfilo’s outrage, which leaves him ill and alone until he follows his family to Paris, exposes the penetration of monetary equivalence into his most intimate affairs. In turn, Sergio adopts the logic of equivalence by assuming another’s identity, evacuating further any claim to self-reflexivity by accepting recognition by another name.

In an ultimately futile attempt to counter this money sickness, where everything is a series of equivalents, Sergio tries to stake out the territory of the capitalist worker. Thus Sergio, the poor orphan, insists on rejecting any money he might gain by marrying Clarita. “Nada admito,” he says, “que, después de todo lo sucedido, pueda hacer pensar que te obtuve para hacer un negocio” (“I accept nothing that, after all that has happened, might make people think that I obtained you in order to make a deal”) (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 296). When she reveals to him the money she has on her person, which was gifted by her father at the first (failed) attempt to marry her to Rosaldez, he insists that it “debe devolverse a [su] padre” (“must be returned to your dad”) and immediately takes responsibility for so doing (296). And when Clarita presents its use as the most practical option—“¿podríamos borrar la realidad?” (“could we efface reality?”)—Sergio states categorically that its use might make his “mujercita” (“little woman”) rich, but that instead they must live “siempre de [su] trabajo” (“always from his work”) (296). The dowry is thus figured as a form of social control that inhibits the emergence of the modern *criollo* couple, an emergence that must rely on the male body’s own labor-value in a capitalist labor-market. The social production of modern subjects is thus achieved in Sergio’s mind, through his willed labor, commodified.

In doing so, Sergio reinscribes masculine authority within this new paradigm, and patriarchy as the new old form of the *oikos*. Clarita, accepting his decision, nonetheless wishes to hold out the possibility of a future in which she may retain the right to money, claiming that she “devuelv[e] ese dinero porque es de [su] padre, no porque sea [suyo]. De otro modo [se] enojaría [con Sergio]” (“returns this money because it is from her dad, not because it is hers. Otherwise, she would be angry at Sergio”) (296). This, however, remains only a potentiality throughout the novel, and the late-developing power of Filomena in the Andújar household (“quiero mandar

algún día” [“I want to give orders one day”], she states after the discovery of Clarita’s flight) only seems to confirm that female power can only appear in the absence of capitalist forms of value such as Clarita embodies (300).

The newly-wed Madrids flee from the colonial situation of their frustrated romance toward metropolitan Europe in order to secure their new life together. They do not, however, travel to the same country whence came Pánfilo, and whose capital shares its name with Sergio’s patronymic. Instead, they head to Paris, with Sergio carrying a letter of introduction from Camilo to Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, the Puerto Rican revolutionary exiled from the colony for his part in the planning of the Lares Rebellion of 1868. They met, Camilo explains, in New York, one of the places where Betances had sought refuge in the aftermath of the failed Lares Rebellion, and Camilo’s opinion of the one-time revolutionary is that “es oro, ese hombre” (“he’s gold, that man”) (265). Betances, here, is a figure outside of the sphere of Spanish imperial power who nonetheless influences it, exerts a force on its relationships and even has the power to break subjects free from its oppressive force.

In his discussion of *El negocio*’s conflicted representation of the concept of credit, Richard Rosa suggests that Betances, like Sergio, “parece representar la nación orientada al pensamiento cívico y al deber” (“appears to represent the nation oriented toward civic thought and responsibility”) (117). This movement toward democracy—an echo of Alonso’s liberalism discussed in Chapter Two, above—“que aparece ligado al mundo comercial, se desenvuelve dentro de la Isla, y hace que de alguna forma las riquezas vayan a donde tienen que ir, adonde les corresponde” (“which appears linked to the commercial world, develops within the island, and makes it such that, in some form, riches will go where they must go, to where they correspond”) (117). This “escisión” (“rift”), as Rosa calls it (117), flummoxes simple mappings of this novel

onto the territory of the nation, as has frequently been done with Zeno Gandía's more canonical work, *La charca*.²⁸ Instead, as Rosa argues, the anxiety over property and propriety in *El negocio* “se traduce, en el caso del narrador, en una angustia con respecto a la posibilidad de narrar adecuadamente” (“translates, in the case of the narrator, into anguish with respect to the possibility of adequately narrating”) (96). To narrate the trade that traversed the colony, and which only accelerated under United States occupation,²⁹ is to risk the impossibility of narration itself. For a society as criss-crossed with intersecting and competing forms of exchange as that of colonial Puerto Rico at the turn of the twentieth century—what Zeno Gandía calls an “ancho embudo” (“wide funnel”) (*El negocio* 92)—the representation of the “real” becomes susceptible to fraud.

It is because of this, perhaps, that Zeno Gandía seeks what Rosa calls the “crédito” (“credit”) of figures such as Betances (“es oro, ese hombre”), who provide a coherent referential point to give credibility to his “descripción totalizadora del mundo” (“totalizing description of the world”) (Rosa 118). The totality depicted here depends on the outside influences of a Puerto Rican exile living in Paris, a man who became (in real life) a diplomatic agent of the Cuban Revolution to France in 1896 (Anderson, *Under Three Flags* 188). Thus, while Janer reads in the plotline of Sergio and Clarita's relationship “an allegory for the successful establishment of an autonomous government” (24), this must be taken with a grain of salt. After all, Sergio and Clarita's relationship can only be consummated in an international itinerary that traverses three empires (Spanish, Danish, and French) and brings the action closer to the center of imperial control, while requiring assistance from social revolutionaries such as Betances. It is not

²⁸ Most readings of *La charca* view it as a national allegory of one type or another. Such readings include Francisco Manrique Cabrera (184-86), Zilka Janer (21-22), and, quite differently, Juan Flores, “Refiguring *La charca*.” This has been a part, as I argue in this chapter and Chapter Two, of “nationalizing” the problems of Puerto Rican cultural production, rather than viewing the very production of culture in Puerto Rico as a problem of global empire.

²⁹ After the United States took control of the island, exports of agricultural products increased considerably. Compare tables 1.2 and 2.9 in Dietz. As the United States government spurred export expansion, United States capital took over a huge swath of the agricultural production, including almost half of sugar milled by 1930 (Ayala and Bernabe 38).

ultimately clear who gains and who loses, nor how the credit given to this narrative will pay off: Revolution? Exile? Autonomy?

Literature was not always so awash in indeterminacy. Jacques Rancière marks the nineteenth century as the rise of what he calls “literarity,” which his translator, Gabriel Rockhill, has defined as “the status of written word that freely circulates outside any system of legitimation” (Rancière, *The Politics* 5). This feature of the written word, which arises with what Rancière calls “[t]he aesthetic regime of the arts,” “asserts the absolute singularity of art and, at the same time, destroys any pragmatic criterion for isolating this singularity. It simultaneously establishes the autonomy of art and the identity of its forms with the forms that life uses to shape itself” (23). In other words, the proliferation of literacy and the printed material that enables it enters the written word into a contestable space of community with(in) society, which in turn shapes that communal space. Though this is necessary for literature to be (perceived as) an aesthetic art, it also antagonizes its own position through allowing people from across the social spectrum access to its legitimizing discourse.

This narrative in many ways resembles Aníbal González Pérez’s account of the rise of *modernismo*, the literary movement that dominated Latin American letters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. González locates the primary epistemology of *modernismo*, which was contemporaneous with *El negocio*’s writing, in philology. Philology, with its concern over the production of knowledge, resembles “la institución en torno a la cual el modernismo construye su literatura” (“the institution around which *modernismo* constructed its literature”) (*La crónica* 12). Philology itself was allied with the development of the comparatist disciplines, including biology, that, in the wake of Charles Darwin, had begun to see language as an object of study in itself, divorced from a transcendent reality that it represented. Philology thus made

language resemble the same rhetorics of biology that had come to influence naturalist novelistics (Lehan 99-150). In so doing, González points out, “el lenguaje se convierte así en un objeto con su propia constitución y su propia historia, independientemente de su función representativa” (“language is thus converted into an object with its own constitution and history, independently of its representative function”) (*La crónica* 15). The solidity of language that was meant to derive from its liberation from the burden of representativity, however, was a failure, and in the space between the transparency of representation and the opacity of historicity, “se alojará la literatura” (“literature will come to be sheltered”) (16). As with the crisis of convertibility diagnosed by Zeno Gandía and his fellow Commissioners in 1899, *El negocio* plays out the impossibility of interpreting colonial culture into broader frames of reference, including nation, empire, and world.

Conclusion

“Identity” as a product of the particularly imperial forms of circulation that permeated Puerto Rico in the transition from the Spanish to the United States regime comes to replace subjectivity as self-reflexive action in *El negocio*. Jean-Joseph Goux, writing of fiction that follows World War I, the abandonment of the Gold Standard in most European countries, and the linguistic revolution of Ferdinand Saussure, claims that “language that expresses the truth of the speaking subject” was lost in this moment, particularly with the loss of the author as *auctoritas* of a world created in his (always thus gendered) word (*The Coiners* 94). What Goux calls “the gold-language of the realist aesthetic” is thus a language that directly links the material world with the fiction of the novel (94).

Goux ties this literary history to the political-economic history of interwar Europe through André Gide's 1925 novel, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* (*The Counterfeiters*), which was written three years after the release of (and up to twenty-eight years after the writing of) Zeno Gandía's *El negocio*. For the contemporary French theorist, Goux, "Gide's novel is a symptom of the collapse of certain profound ideological mediations between economic life and life proper. Existence tends toward a reduction to economic existence. Experience is subsumed wholesale into the political economy" (*The Coiners* 20). Whatever "life proper" means for Goux—and his work consistently requires the bracketing out of economic activity from all other activity in an unconvincing manner—Gide's novel marks the end of the possibility of realist narrative, by its use of realist style, to negate the realist aesthetic's claim to transparency. As demonstrated above, however, Zeno Gandía made the same claims in the same manner, not just within the novel form, but within his political work as well. It is possible to argue that the crisis of realism is not experienced first in the metropolitan sites, in which inconvertibility came only after 1919, but in the colonial sites that experienced money and subjectivity as opaque, flat, and ineffectual since at least the nineteenth century.

Benedict Anderson has discussed the development of ideas of identity from concepts of "bound seriality" arising from the census of imperial governments ("Nationalism"). Anderson claims that the search for "identity," "which rhetorically move[s] inward towards the site that once housed the soul, in fact proceed[s] outward towards real and imagined censuses, where, thanks to capitalism, state machineries, and mathematics, integral bodies become identical, and thus serially aggregable as phantom communities" (44). While Anderson attributes this governmental turn toward the constitution of the self on the flowering of nationalisms (both successful and failed), it also suggests nationalism's biggest failure: to adequately account for the

material reality of existence. As belonging to the order of identity (as fiat money and the term “colonial subject” are) rather than the “real” (as gold and self-reflexivity are conceived to be), imperial subjects were always already detached from the presumptive norms of “natural laws” that governed metropolitan discourses of money and subjectivity. In the crisis of realism in *El negocio*, filiations to José Montero y Vidal’s depiction of the cash-strapped Philippines in my Chapter Three are also present, while expanding the social purview to present a self-critique of Zeno Gandía’s own position within the economy.

As an exposé of what animates capitalist society as an organic whole—inconvertible money—Zeno Gandía highlights the origins of modernity in lack. In addition to its ambiguity in Spanish as both the object of commerce and the act of exchange itself, the etymology of *negocio* itself derives from pure negation: from Latin, *neg-* + *-otium*, meaning “denial of leisure.” As Franco Moretti has pointed out, quoting from Emile Benveniste, “trade—one of the earliest forms of ‘bourgeois activity—was ‘an occupation which, at least in the beginning, did not correspond to any of the hallowed, traditional activities,’ and . . ., as a consequence, it could only be defined by negative terms” (*The Bourgeois* 8 n. 17). Without the sanctification of traditional goals such as the discovery of truth, the satisfaction of bodily needs, etc., *negotium* is merely a placeholder, the dissipation of time and energy. (This rhetoric’s proximity to nineteenth-century vitalist theories of physiology should be noted.)

Such lack of clear motive or direction produces a baleful pragmatism, according to *El negocio*’s Camilo. Camilo serves as an antagonist to the reigning doxa of colonial society, while himself succumbing to a pessimistic alcoholism. Arguing with the businessmen in the *cafetín*, Camilo claims that their speculations “no ten[ian] en cuenta otra cosa que las conveniencias. ¿Sale bien un negocio? Pues fue bueno. No os ocurre pensar en la clase a que el negocio

pertenece, en la honorabilidad que lo inspira, en la verdad que le sirve de base” (“does not have in mind anything other than convenience. Does the business turn out well? Then it’s good. It doesn’t occur to you to think in what category the business belongs, in the honorability that inspires it, in the truth that serves at its base”) (Zeno Gandía, *El negocio* 40). The *negocio*, the denial of leisure, is thus a curious producer of ease. “Category (or type),” “honorability,” and “truth” are all ignored for the sake of “convenience,” ease, leisure. The *negocio* thus becomes not the denial of leisure, but the placing of leisure at the “base” of action, as action’s goal. Having severed the link between the real and its appearance, between rumor and reality, and between money and the commodities it represents, the characters in *El negocio* must seek a new “base” other than their own fecund island. Zeno Gandía’s critique of this state of being—a critique that is summed up in the distribution of money to the revolutionary cause begun by Betances, and which Camilo had stolen from a thief—results in a novel in which the social condition of men in the colony is determined not by their political limitations within the colony, but by their role in the circulation of money outside of it.

The denouement to the crisis of convertibility and operability that plagued turn-of-the-century Puerto Rico manifests itself in a scene of imperial non-recognition. It is the sentence with which, according to Aníbal González-Pérez, Zeno Gandía ended his life, “uttered in delirium on his deathbed:” “Solicito del General de los Estados Unidos una noche de sueño” (“I solicit of the General of the United States a night of sleep”) (“Manuel Zeno Gandía” 322). Unable during his life to achieve the transparency of self-reflexive action that he sought for Puerto Rico in the independence cause, Zeno Gandía expresses an experienced need to petition for his bodily functions, a petition that submits the whole body to the sovereignty of the United States’ colonial presence in its militarized form. Simultaneously, it satirizes the regime through

its solicitation to determine the very limit of political control (i.e. death).³⁰ In this, Zeno Gandía submits his will to hegemonic approval, and resigns his subject position to the technocratic order of domination that animated the United States's occupation of Puerto Rico, including its contestations, such as *The Case of Puerto Rico*, for which its authors must claim *expertise* in Puerto Rican political economy in order to be recognized. Rather than submit his body to naturalist narratives of florescence and decadence, nature and self-reflexivity are submitted to the military-capitalist order of empire. Whether this deathbed statement is an expression of delirium or gallows' humor I leave to the reader.

³⁰ The story as it circulates is of more interest to this chapter than the veracity of Zeno Gandía's having historically uttered these words.

Chapter Five: The Ends of the World: The Philippines, 1896-1926

Introduction

In the special section of a recent issue of *Kritika Kultura*, Adam Lifshey claimed that “investigations into Filipino literature in Spanish . . . inherently call into question the cultural maps of various countries and of academic research itself. Its very marginality bestows upon it the potential to incite new insights in diverse fields” (“Forum”). Lifshey’s assertion contradicts one of the classic narratives of literature in the Philippines, *Origins and Rise of the Filipino Novel*, by Resil Mojares. This landmark study traces a curious linguistic trajectory. Mojares’s narrative begins with the vernacular traditions (particularly in Tagalog), focusing on genres such as the *corrido* and the books of conduct written by priests in the Catholic Church in the indigenous languages of the archipelago. In his chapter on “Late Colonial Narratives,” his attention suddenly shifts to the Spanish-language novels of Pedro Paterno and José Rizal as the crowning achievements of Philippine novelistics in the nineteenth century, and his chapter references almost no works in the indigenous languages. Paterno, whose *Ninay* of 1885 is the first novel written by an ethnic Filipino to be published, is discussed briefly, while Rizal’s two published novels occupy center stage at this moment in the historical narrative. All of these works—as well as the works of Isabelo de los Reyes and Marcelo H. del Pilar that merit brief attention—are written in Castilian Spanish, the language of government and education in the colonial Philippines of the time. Mojares’s study, in fact, does a wonderful job of arguing for

displacing Rizal as the fountainhead of all Philippine literature that follows, placing the poet-martyr in a uniquely broad linguistic and cultural context. Ultimately, however, though Mojares chalks up his own lack of consideration of the vernacular writers that were working at the same time as Rizal to a lack of extent materials,¹ by focusing on vernacular literatures at all points *other* than the period in which Rizal worked, Mojares returns us to a position of Rizal's centrality. His exceptionalism is encoded in the very language of his production.

In Mojares' study, Rizal now serves as the cosmopolitan backdrop against which the *Bildung* of the nation can be narrated in relief. Where other historical work had discussed Rizal as himself without precedent (Leon Guerrero calling him the "first Filipino"), Mojares insistently places him as a Spanish-language aberration in the development of a vernacular novelistics. His examination of what he calls "The Rise of the Filipino Novel" after 1900—equating "Filipino" with "vernacular," as he does everywhere other than the chapter on Rizal—depicts the novels that followed Rizal as a parochialized effect of what made the National Hero great:

The fact that the early vernacular novels are a stylistic regression from the standard set by Rizal is explained by the uneven character of colonial intellectual life. First of all, most vernacular novelists did not have Rizal's education or access to European literary tradition. Secondly, the material conditions in the production of early vernacular novels differ: they were conceived under different circumstances and without the kind of compulsions that attended Rizal's creations; they were written for popular serialization and at a time of accelerating social ambivalence and unrest. (Mojares, *Origins* 174-75)

¹ "We know little of these [vernacular] writers outside of stray facts," he claims (*Origins* 158 n.92). In fact, there is probably no one who has done more to locate rare materials and to restore the literary world of the Philippines in the nineteenth century than Mojares. In addition to *Origins*, see, among many others, his *Cebuano Literature* and *Brains of the Nation*. Everyone writing about Philippine literary history in his wake owes him an enormous debt of gratitude.

If I have quoted Mojares at such length, it is in part because his position seems to me emblematic of a broader tradition of literary historiography on the Philippines. The presumption of parochialness is at the forefront of this thinking. And yet regarding the novels that continued Rizal's Spanish-language legacy in Philippine literature, Mojares remains silent in this study. This despite the fact that, as Mojares himself admits, Spanish "was the language through which the native could come into contact with the larger world" (171). What are we to make of Mojares' silence regarding the Spanish-language novels that proliferated throughout the United States' occupation from 1898 to 1942?

Mojares's curious gap echoes a certain fatalism in Spanish-language novels published after Rizal's execution by Spain in 1896. With the arrival of the United States and the establishment of English as a national language alongside Spanish in 1902, the future of Fil-Hispanic culture became uncertain.² This is not to say, however, that the arrival of the United States trampled unimpeded over the aspirations of global belonging to which many in the Spanish-speaking Philippine elite had aspired. In his first novel from 1911, *Bancarrota de almas* (*Bankruptcy of Souls*), the famous poet Jesús Balmori seems unable to prevent himself from citing a world of literature to frame his story of modern mores and social fictions. The references are primarily to French literature (Stephane Mallarmé, Charles Baudelaire, Albert Samian, Paul Verlaine, and Émile Zola) and Spanish (Cervantes, Emilia Pardo Bazán, and Vicente Blasco Ibáñez), but also include German philosophy (Friedrich Nietzsche) and Nicaraguan poetry (Rubén Darío). Some of these references are slight, while some are more detailed, such as the quotations in French from Mallarmé, Baudelaire, and Samian, respectively, which precede different sections of the

² For a brief synopsis of language policy and development in the Philippines between 1898 and 1942, see Lifshy (*Magellan* 89-90). The term "Fil-Hispanic" is derived from Luis Mariñas (16), and is used here to refer to Spanish-language culture in the Philippines, as well as the influences from and effects on a broader Spanish-language sphere that production by Filipinos had.

novel. What is noticeably absent is any reference to Anglo-American letters. The patterns of literary consumption that appear to belong to Balmori himself are reflected by his characters, who discuss Nietzschean philosophy and the *modernista* poetry of Darío as a part of their daily life.³ These dialogues are often punctuated by the quotidian affairs of the United States occupation, such as the appearance of military bands, American entrepreneurs, and English-language education. The literary references and the minor events of imperialism scattered throughout the novel paint a picture of daily practices of cosmopolitanism and the consumption of imported intellectual goods.

The worldliness of Balmori's novel, however, sits uneasily with the disappearance of modern notions of political liberation. In *Bancarrota de almas*, cosmopolitan culture comes at the expense of the model of national independence that had animated the Philippine Revolution of 1896 and which increasingly provided the vocabulary of politics across the globe.⁴ In particular, the image of the modern woman as a figure susceptible to foreign influences threatens the genealogical stability and social cohesion that had typically marked the "nation" of nationalism.⁵ As becomes evident in Balmori's novel, at the beginning of the twentieth century, modernity's worldly, gender-bending luxury appeared to the Spanish-speaking elite of the Philippines to be dissipating the possibility of a politics oriented toward the Philippine nation itself.

In returning to the novels written by and depicting the Spanish-educated social stratum—texts left out of Mojares' highly influential study as well as the numerous studies of Tagalog

³ Throughout this essay, I use *modernismo* and its derivatives to refer to the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century literary movement that began in Latin America. This is in order to avoid any confusion with Euro-American "modernism," which is unrelated. For a discussion of *modernismo*'s features, see Lindstrom 188-202.

⁴ The touchstone text on the genesis and spread of modern notions of nationalism is still Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. I discuss the dominance of the nation as a heuristic of literary study in Chapter One.

⁵ Étienne Balibar's work with Immanuel Wallerstein investigates these ideas in *Race*. Cf. Balibar, "Citizen." On the figure of the "modern girl" in international context, see The Modern Girl around the World Research Group.

novelistic⁶—a connected world of Spanish, English, and vernacular literatures becomes visible. Perhaps what is more interesting is that by returning to novels such as Balmori's *Bancarrota de almas*, the deep worldliness and modernity of the vernacular tradition becomes visible. For example, in Faustino Aguilar's *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos (In the Name of God)*,⁷ published the same year as Balmori's novel, a world of competing philosophies regarding gender, modernity, and the subject become evident by reading it alongside Balmori's novel of the same period. Where Balmori envisions only a desolate world based on exchanges and translations that undermine the coherence of the nation-people, Aguilar proposes a world in which the subject's relationship to society could potentially be founded on an affective relationship beyond economic accountings. What appears to be a distinction in language use becomes, instead, a political struggle over the meaning of "the Filipino" and over how it will be deployed in future projects of community- and state-building.⁸

Style as the Liberation of the Self

Bancarrota de almas tells the story of the tangled affairs of a young woman, Ángela, who is courted by two men: her cousin, an orphan named Ventura Ruiz, who studies law; and a poet named Augusto Valdivia. Despite the religious prohibition against their relationship laid down by the Catholic Church's laws on consanguinity, Ángela and Ventura meet clandestinely in the

⁶ I am thinking in particular of Soledad Reyes, *Nobelang Tagalog* and Faustino Aguilar, *Pagkaunlad*. Both Lifshy and John D. Blanco have begun to resurrect these texts as objects of critical study.

⁷ Originally published as *Sa ñgalan ng Diyos* in 1911, I use the updated orthography with which the 2004 Ateneo de Manila University Press edition is printed for clarity to contemporary readers of Tagalog.

⁸ Compare this to Lifshy's slightly more limited admonition, while discussing the Spanish-Filipino writer José Sedano y Calonge, that "[t]he appearance of literature in Spanish by Filipinos . . . is not only about the emergence of 'literature in Spanish.' It is also about the emergence of 'Filipinos'" (*Magellan* 126). This is certainly true, but by limiting his work to Spanish-language texts, Lifshy reduces "the emergence of 'Filipinos'" to their emergence as participants in material distributions of global capital and imperial politics (the subtitle *The Magellan Fallacy* specifically orients his readings towards discourses of "globalization"). By comparing these texts to the vernacular tradition, Fil-Hispanism can be seen as a worldview oriented instead toward the Philippines itself.

home of Ángela's mother, where they are both living, in order to kiss. Wracked with guilt, Ángela turns her affections to a recent acquaintance, Augusto, whose poems based on French Symbolism and Latin American *modernismo* have begun to appear in literary journals. A lengthy romance is carried on, mainly through letters between Augusto and Ángela, which culminates in Ángela's pregnancy. Before this is revealed to her family, Augusto dies of phthisis (tuberculosis), and Ángela resigns herself to marriage with her cousin, who, it seems, will raise the baby unaware that it does not share his biological make-up.

The risk of incest between Ventura and Ángela is, in some ways, not a risk at all, or, rather, it is a risk that is anticipated. Ventura comes to live with Ángela and her mother, Doña Rosenda, after his mother dies. Since Ventura's father had already died, Doña Rosenda serves as the administrator of the family wealth, consisting of a *hacienda* and some farms. Ventura's future is thus already tied to his cousin's family irreversibly and in such a way that, even if he were not entranced by Ángela's piano-playing and singing, he would be in thrall to her fate. Nonetheless, his attraction is narrated as more than that of fortune and family. As she plays Chopin's nocturnes on the piano, Ventura hears it as a particular interpellation: "¡cómo le hablaba ella desde casa, con su piano! ¡cómo le decía dulcemente, 'ven,' con la música, eco de su voz!" ("how she spoke to him from the house, with her piano! how she told him sweetly, 'come,' with the music, echo of her voice!") (Balmori 22). The seduction not only calls to his ears, however, but to something much deeper, for as he listens, he begins to hear promises as yet unspoken: "interiormente Ventura se prometía mil caricias, caricias que él devolvería en usura, enfermo de amor" ("in his interior, Ventura was promised a thousand caresses, caresses that he would return with interest, sick from love") (23). This sickness mirrors and presages the physical ailment that will afflict his rival, Augusto, later in the novel. Simultaneously, it projects a potential future in

the unreciprocated promise, a promise he makes to himself through the vehicle of Ángela's piano-playing. Ventura thus falls in love with a simulation of Ángela, a simulation that provides the phantom capital for his usury (*usura*) of caresses.

However, Ventura's reveries on the capital of caresses is immediately interrupted by the presence of the United States military, as "los sonidos que estrepitosamente lanzaba una banda militar yankee [*sic*]" ("the sounds that a Yankee military band launched noisily") come from the Luneta and drown out the piano's sound (23). The Luneta, as I mentioned in Chapter Three, is where the Philippine National Hero José Rizal was executed, an execution that touched off the 1896 Revolution, which was, in turn, coopted by the United States and turned into the beginning of a 40-year occupation. As a result, the park serves as both a site of national triumph and shame. The military band that performs there not only advertises their political domination of the Philippines and its history, but threatens to invade and erase the interiority of Filipinos themselves.

It is of paramount importance that this activity takes place in Ventura's "interior," that the interior itself is what is called and what responds to the music of the Polish-French composer Chopin. Interiority holds a privileged place in studies of Philippine society as *loob*, literally meaning "inside/interiority," but functioning epistemologically in a manner often taken to be specific to Filipino subjectivity. One outgrowth of this line of inquiry has been the development of a host of theories that focus on Filipinoness as a unique position.⁹ By contrast, Albert Alejo has suggested that *loob* is a metaphysical concept of relationality. He claims that the "pagpapahayag ng loob sa labas, sa pagkilos, sa pagdamay sa kapwa, ay hindi lamang pagpapahayag ng sarili kundi paglikha ng daigdig" ("expression of interiority to the outside, in

⁹ Leading to, among other movements, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology), which has as its goals *pagsasakatutubo* (indigenization), *pagkaagham* (science), and *pagkapilipino* (Filipino identification) (Enriquez 39).

action, in sympathy with another, is not just an expression of the self, but the making of a world”) (32). It is thus that social interaction bears in it a world and a worldview for which the individual is responsible to another. The actions of the characters in *Bancarrota de almas* might be seen as not merely expressions of subjective positions, but productive of sets of relations unique to their appearance in history.¹⁰

Balmori represents these historically-bound positions as coming about through the practice of literary cultivation. One day, as Ángela is leafing through a book of Ventura’s, Augusto sees it and asks if she likes it. When Ángela replies with indifference, Augusto begins to loan her books of his own liking, among them *Tú eres la paz* (*You Are Peace*), presumably the novel of the same name by the Spanish *modernista* writer and film-maker, Gregorio Martínez Sierra, published in 1906. As a result of the loans, Ángela feels that “se iba formando una estética y un gusto de lectura exquisita lejos de los realísimos de Zola, Trigo, la condesa Bazan [*sic*], Blasco Ibañez y otros autores deleitadores de Ventura” (“was forming an aesthetic and a taste for exquisite readings far from the realisms of Zola, Trigo, the Countess Bazán, Blanco Ibañez and other entertaining authors of Ventura”) (Balmori 156). Taste (*gusto*) here is clearly something formed through experience, as Ángela’s taste is reshaped by her immersion in “estas lecturas suaves, humildes y piadosas de novelistas poetas, pintores de almas que mojaban sus pinceles en tintas de aurora” (“these delicate, humble, and faithful readings of poet novelists, painters of souls who dipped their pens in the pigments of dawn”) (156). By reading these texts with such care, Ángela performs a self-cultivation that brings her in line with the fashionable and cosmopolitan tastes of her lover.

¹⁰ Though Alejo is speaking at the level of the metaphysical, his exposition is mirrored in many ways by the ontological examinations of fiction by Thomas Pavel.

Ángela's development is predicated on her exposure to a collection of *modernista* texts that derange her previous understanding of literature-as-realism. Her reading is thus both an experiment in and a representation of what Cathy L. Jrade has called “*modernismo*'s faith in the transformative capacity of art, that is, its ability to see beyond the stultification of everyday existence and entrenched worldviews and to perceive truths that can act as correctives to human foibles and failed social systems” (139). Literature in the *modernista* vein becomes a language of renovation and novelty, rather than the reification of the everyday. Ángela can thus escape from the bonds of tradition only through an internal changing of language, of old words used in new ways towards new ends.

Rafael Palma, a Filipino writer, lawyer, and politician who came of age during the revolutionary ferment of the 1890s and 1900s, recalls a similar relationship between reading habits and changing mores in his own life. This transformation is specifically linked to literary translation. As he wrote in his memoirs,

Spanish translations of French writers such as Rousseau, Lammenais, Victor Hugo, Sue, and many others succeeded in giving my ideas and concepts a new, and definite orientation. . . . I courted the women I loved and even learned to dance. I laughed at the senile ideas which we had imbibed in college that the devil is enmeshed in the skirts of the women. It was not only my religious ideas that were changed, but also my political ideas. (25)

Palma's recollections suggest that the fount of revolutionary thought was in the transmission of materials from abroad into the national space. Through (Castilian) Spanish translations, Palma was given “a medium with which to leave, even if only momentarily, [his] origins behind and identify with the coming of an alternative, pre- as well as postcolonial history” (Rafael, *Promise*

xvii). These foreign sources challenged all aspects of social life, and, for Palma, are most evident in the skirts of young women, whose newfound liberation from Spanish social control is also a freeing of the (male) Filipino subject.

In the time of revolution, literature thus played a significant role in the production of new subjects. Palma describes the enthusiasm that gripped him and his colleagues in the revolutionary newspaper, *La independencia*, which inveighed against the incursions of the United States. While some thought the quality of the paper must be attributable to non-Filipino writers, Palma proudly claims the work as that of Filipinos who “had imbibed deeply from virginal fountains; for a few of them read books and periodicals imported directly from abroad” (34). Palma and his peers are depicted as themselves the products of the consumption of foreign intellectual goods, which had molded and inspired them to literary heights to the point where they appeared themselves to be foreign.

Anomalous in the 1890s, the aesthetic subjects that Palma describes as arising during the Revolution were, by 1911, a part of the social landscape, as can be seen in the third section of *Bancarrota de almas*, entitled “Las cartas del poeta” (“The Letters of the Poet”). This epistolary section, which extends to sixty-six pages, substitutes for a narrative of Augusto’s seduction of Ángela. Framed by Ángela’s reading under electric lights (more on this below), the cards date from July 31, 1907 to November 19 of the same year, and allow the reader (as well as the reader’s double, Ángela, who is minutely described in the act of reading) insight into Augusto’s thoughts on morality, prostitution, and matrimony. They also chronicle his slow and mysterious death from what turns out to be tuberculosis. The sheer volume of letters sent to Ángela, and the absence of written response included in the pages of the novel (although Augusto occasionally references letters that Ángela presumably sent), establish absence as an extension of the self. The

self is freed from its limitations and the restrictions of context to figure more freely in the readers' minds. As Derrida has remarked, "a written sign carries with it a force of breaking with its context, that is, the set of presences which organize the moment of its inscription" ("Signature" 317). The letter is not bound by the context in which it is first written. Rather, the signature, by creating a durable presence of the writer, drags the figure it represents (i.e. the letter-writer) into the present of the text's reading. In doing so, Augusto's letters establish their own necessary terms of receipt even in his physical absence. Thus, when he confesses to Ángela—with full religious pomp, his imagined Ángela serving in place of the priest—to having slept with a prostitute, it prescribes the terms in which fidelity can be understood, specifically as fidelity to the a self that lies outside of the vagaries of the material world (201). The most radical interpretation of this scene, which, as Lourdes Castrillo Brillantes suggests, "seems to express the author's opinion that morality is something private" (Brillantes 69), is nonetheless foreclosed as the poet and consummate individualist, Augusto, dies of a social disease.

If the individual's presence can persist outside of its own physical present (in the form of the signature), the self becomes something other than a body. It becomes, instead, a disposition of self towards the social. It is thus that the contrasts between Ventura and Augusto can be drawn along questions of style. While Ventura tries to engage on their own terms (that is, as themselves subjects of a particular kind) with the institutions of finance and law established by the Spanish and United States regimes, Augusto makes of himself the object of fashion, and in so doing subscribes to something that might be called an "estilo modernista" ("*modernista* style"). In an article with this title that appeared in 1904 in the Manila daily, *El renacimiento*—one of the many papers to which Balmori contributed—the Spanish novelist Pío Baroja claims that "antes, una época tenía su estilo . . . Hoy, cado individuo es una época. Haeckel dice que la ontogenia—

desarrollo del individuo—es la recapitulación de la filogenia—desarrollo de la especie” (“before, an era had its own style. Today, each individual is an era. Haeckel says that ontogeny—development of the individual—is the recapitulation of phylogeny—development of the species”). With recourse to the current trends in evolutionary biology, then, Baroja makes an argument for the naturalness of contemporary stylistic eccentricity. This argument uses Ernst Haeckel’s well-known adage on the relationship of the individual to the species to justify spontaneity and stylistic rupture. Following the trope of evolution, Baroja justifies a rather Romantic concept of the act of creation: “Yo creo que se debe escribir como se siente. Si los defectos son una consecuencia natural del temperamento, hay que dejarlos, si son consecuencia de un hábito ó de un procedimiento, hay que quitarlos. No creo que se debe adornar nada conscientemente que no haya nacido adornado de dentro” (“I believe that one must write as one feels. If the defects are a natural consequence of the temperament, leave them in place; if they are a consequence of a habit or a procedure, get rid of them. I don’t believe that anything should be adorned consciously what isn’t born adorned on the inside”). Presenting the self—which is representing the whole species-history—becomes the objective of a progressive artistic practice. Augusto, who insists on the spontaneous self, thus eschews morality as a repressive apparatus of a bygone era.

What Augusto fails to take into account in the process is that such a glorification of the self as autonomous tends to locate the individual as the site of the most complete replication. Many of the qualities that Baroja notes of the new “estilo modernista” are also indicative of a certain attitude toward democratic governance. In *Las máscaras democráticas del modernismo* (*The Democratic Masks of Modernismo*), Ángel Rama notes five characteristics of what he calls the “sistema productivo democrático” (“productive, democratic system”) in Latin America (26), as

gleaned from political pamphlets and poetic manifestos of the late nineteenth century: 1) the turn away from lengthy, highly composed works toward spontaneous, shorter texts; 2) the dissolution of the coterie as the main audience for creative works; 3) the origins of ideas in interpersonal interaction and public forums (a “comercio de todos,” as Rama calls it); 4) the decentralization of intellectual authority; and 5) above all, the dispersion of inherited conventions, which is, for Rama, “la clave de la originalidad artística y simultáneamente de la libertad política” (“the key to artistic originality and, simultaneously, political liberty”) (26). The emphasis on “individuality” and “spontaneity” in Baroja is clearly linked to a form of democratic thought, although, as Rama points out, it is a democracy without individuality. The content of literature, Rama argues, “como los seres humanos enmascaradas, como las mercadería en el circuito que rige la moneda, se equiparan como valores de cambio, lo que permite su mutua sustitución” (“like human beings in masks, like merchandise in the circuit that regulates money, is equipped with values for change, which permits their mutual substitution”) (159). Thus the democratic masks of *modernista* literature illustrate a duality: at the moment at which personal style as a spontaneous expression becomes the substance of literariness, the individual becomes instantly outmoded, as he or she does or does not strike the fancy of another. Fashion is a species of the democratic drive.

The Nation versus Liberation

If democracy and *modernismo* both rely on similar ideological structures, then the Philippines’s entry into *modernista* letters might signify a desire and readiness for independence. Foreign influences in *Bancarrota de almas* can then be seen as the creation of a genealogy of Philippine intellectual culture intended to lead to liberation. In that regard, it is important that, in addition to the foreign writers already mentioned, Balmori references Philippine authors

Francisco Baltazar (also known as Balagtas), José Rizal, Fernando María Guerrero (a contemporary of Balmori), and, curiously, Balmori himself. In a discussion between Ventura and his uncle, Don Alejandro, on the topic of independence, Ventura quotes his own creator, Balmori, in defense of his pro-independence stance, citing: “Si es inutil [*sic*] la espada de la ciencia, / ¡Que fulgure la ciencia de la espada!” (“If the sword of science is useless, / May the science of the sword shine forth!”) (Balmori 321). Here Balmori attempts to construct an intellectual genealogy for the modern generation via both extra-Philippine literature—represented by Spanish, French, German, and Nicaraguan writers—and Philippine literature, with himself as the contemporary standard-bearer. Citing himself in this context links Balmori, as both creator of and character in this fictional world, to the manifold history of world letters.

In the context of Ventura’s conversation with Don Alejandro, such a genealogy suggests that the condition of independence that Don Alejandro sets—whether the people are apt for self-government, the condition of the 1916 Jones Act that I discuss below—can be demonstrated by Balmori’s own novel. Don Alejandro, however, ridiculing political autonomy as one of “esas ideas modernistas” (“these *modernista*/modernist ideas”) (320),¹¹ retreats to the position of the Philippine Assembly, which, he claims, had voted against independence. He thus uses the very logic that the Jones Act would be enshrined in newly articulating Philippine dependence to the United States after 1916 (Kramer 361-63). Two incommensurable arguments are drawn: on the one side, a tradition of liberal, literary thought, whose exponents, Rama suggests above, are susceptible to illusion; on the other, a stern pragmatics that entrenches elitism and global inequalities.

¹¹ Here *modernista* in the original could conceivably refer merely to a modern-oriented personality, rather than an adherent to the literary style of *modernismo*, hence the dual translation.

Ventura's relation to modernity is thus vexed, as he espouses independence while dismissing contemporary styles. He even calls Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* "porquerías" ("imbecilities"), having read a few lines fleetingly, stretched out on his bed fully clothed and with his shoes on (Balmori 24). However, the flippancy with which he approaches modern European thought might be seen as a sign of the already real independence and modernity of Ventura, for not only is he not in thrall to European intellectual currents, but his casual attitude towards reading suggests the impatience and disinterest toward cultivation as a process (as opposed to spontaneous style) that shapes Baroja's "*modernista* style," discussed above.

Augusto, on the other hand, is shown to be a lover of *modernismo* as a fashionable import from Latin America, reading the movement's foremost practitioner, Rubén Darío, and comparing Ángela to Darío's creations (223). A glimpse at some founding texts of *modernismo* suggests why Augusto's ideological distance from Ventura might not have coincided with a politics of national independence. In "El modernismo," an essay by Darío written in November 1901, the Nicaraguan poet and fictionist suggests that *modernismo* finds its footing in the "inmediato comercio material y espiritual con las distintas naciones del mundo" ("immediate material and spiritual commerce of the distinct nations of the world") to which Latin American has been subject since the fifteenth century (35). Its florescence after the 1880s results, Darío continues, "porque existe en la nueva generación americana un inmenso deseo de progreso y un vivo entusiasmo" ("because there exists in the new Latin American generation an immense desire for progress and a lively enthusiasm") (35). *Modernismo*, then, is a direct outgrowth of the social ferment and developmental optimism that the Spanish American countries were experiencing in

the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and to which Filipinos had actively, if unsuccessfully in terms of politics, been committed.¹²

It is, perhaps, this postcolonial dynamism that produces the perception in Darío's work of a turn toward non-Spanish models. Juan Valera, the Spanish Realist novelist, diplomat, and member of the Academia Española de la Lengua, writes in his introductory note of October 22, 1888, included in recent editions of Darío's groundbreaking work, *Azul...* (*Blue...*), that the stories included therein “[p]arecen escritos en París, y no en Nicaragua ni en Chile” (“appear written in Paris, and not in Nicaragua or Chile”) (Darío, *Azul...* 12). The *afrancesado* (“French-influenced”) style of Darío's work is not, Valera says, a problem, but he would applaud it even more strongly “si con esa ilustración francesa que en [Darío] hay, se combinasen la inglesa, la alemana, la italiana, ¿y por qué no la española también?” (“if with this French embellishment that is in Darío, there was combined English, German, Italian, and, why not?, Spanish”) (16). The tongue-in-cheek suggestion of a worldliness in Darío's work that could yet be more worldly is not meant precisely as critique, but more as gaud. Darío, whose work Valera praises for being “impregnado de espíritu cosmopolita” (“imbued with a cosmopolitan spirit”) (4), approaches the heights of Spanish literary culture—at least as embodied by the Academician Valera—through a turning towards the world.

This turning towards is also a turning away from nationalism. Focusing his attention on Darío's native Nicaragua, Valera says that “ni hay ni puede haber aún historia literaria, escuela y tradiciones literarias en Nicaragua” (“there is not, nor can there even be, literary history, schools, or traditions in Nicaragua”) (5). The lack of literary traditions in a country that had declared itself independent only fifty years earlier, and only nineteen years before Darío was born, might not be all that surprising. After all, what can be called truly “Nicaraguan” prior to its declaration

¹² Darío's argument here is expanded by the discussion in Ericka Beckman (42-79).

of independence in 1838 and the adoption of the appellation “Nicaragua” to delimit a territory and population?¹³ The logical end of this lack of national character in Darío’s work, however, is more surprising, as Valera than insists that “si no tiene [Darío] carácter nacional, posee carácter individual” (“if Darío does not have national character, he possesses individual character”) (5). Valera’s assessment of Darío is that the work is radically contingent, such that the book “podría ser de un autor francés, que de un italiano, que de un turco o de un griego” (“could be from a French author, or an Italian, or a Turk, or a Greek”) (4). Here, Valera presumes language, geography, and ethnic or national belonging as some of the possible, even probable, sources of literary production, but then negates them all in Darío’s case. Deracinated, *Azul...* comes to us as only *incidentally* by a Nicaraguan.

The book titled *Azul...* appears as an extension of Darío’s rootlessness in the world. As such, Valera continues, it is stripped not only of national origins, but of ethical orientation: “Si se me preguntase qué enseña su libro de usted y de qué trata, respondería yo sin vacilar: no enseña nada, y trata de nada y de todo. Es obra de artista, obra de pasatiempo, de mera imaginación” (“If I were asked what this book of yours teaches, and what it is about, I would respond without vacillation: it teaches nothing, and is about nothing and everything. It is the work of an artist, a work of pastime, of mere imagination”) (6). It is an object purged of interest in a Kantian sense, with neither origin nor orientation, and, therefore, no moral outlook.

As is evident in Balmori’s translation of *modernismo* to the Philippines, it was exactly this loss of moral and national interest that so horrified the Filipino elites about both modernity and *modernismo*. His consolation is a renewed Spanish language, infused with the currents of Latin American thought. For the Spanish diplomat Luis Mariñas Otero, the Castilian language serves

¹³ Nicaragua itself is derived from the Niquirano tribe indigenous to the area, but “Nicaraguan” in Valera’s note surely does not refer to the ethnic group, so much as to the citizens of the nation-state founded in their territory and the territories adjacent.

as a type of fraternal bond between and beyond nations that is founded in shared culture. In 1972, as Mariñas wrote his brief study of what Fil-Hispanic literature, he lamented that the Spanish language in the Pacific archipelago was in crisis and called on Spanish-speakers across the globe to help maintain “la llama de la cultura común” (“the flame of common culture”) (84). Balmori, sixty years earlier, had also envisioned this potential loss, and had responded similarly.

Gender and Genealogy in Modernity

The loss of the Fil-Hispanic world can be glimpsed in Balmori’s depiction of the gendered aspects of modernity. As mentioned above, when Ángela reads Valdivia’s letters, she is framed by electric lights. Electricity figures prominently in *Bancarrota de almas* despite only a few specific mentions. Electricity seems to have appeared in the Philippines first in the 1880s, around the time that Balmori was born (Reyes, “Modernizing” 199). As Raquel Reyes notes, in addition to the expansion of lighting possibilities, electricity also provided new means of telecommunication and more immediate means of contact within and beyond the archipelago. Electricity was also put to use in the Philippines—as in the United States—for the treatment and easement of social illnesses, from nervous conditions to phthisis (tuberculosis), the very disease from which Augusto suffers and eventually dies. It was also used for vibrators meant to benefit a woman’s health and “to help her achieve a look that was modern and part of a modern lifestyle” (207). While it followed on a long history of therapeutic stimulation, the electric vibrator’s introduction to the market for home use made sexual stimulation a staple of women’s self-care, in the Philippines as well as in the Global North (207).¹⁴ Though Balmori studiously avoids explicating the relationship between modernity and female sexuality, Ángela’s modernity is as

¹⁴ Cf. Rachel Maines, *The Technology*, 67-110.

evident in her dalliance with Augusto as her proximity to electricity and its potential for beautifying and vibratory therapy.

The sexualized aspects of modernity featured prominently in the discourse of Philippine intellectuals who preceded Balmori, including the aforementioned José Rizal, and in the same ambivalent moral tone. Reyes has noted the figure of infection and degeneration that female sexuality represented for the generation of Filipino writers and artists before Balmori's. Rizal, for example, was remembered by his compatriots for his abstention, purportedly admonishing his roommate in Brussels that while a man should visit a brothel once a month, anything more was excessive (Reyes, *Love* 188). Reyes links this restricted licentiousness to Rizal's artistic production, suggesting that he was fascinated by "the Caucasian European woman whose seemingly insatiable sexuality he found dangerously attractive and erotically appealing" (191). For Rizal, female sexuality posed a physiological and moral threat to the health and responsibilities of the representatives of a new class of Filipino. Recoiling from his own physical desires, Rizal would retreat to his work in medical studies and political writing. After the initial kiss between Ángela and Ventura in *Bancarrota de almas*, Ventura, like Rizal, returns to spending most of his time studying law, while Augusto's letters to Ángela suggest a considerable amount of time spent in brothels and in other sensual gratifications (dinners out, alcohol and drug consumption, etc.), as well as reading foreign materials and scribbling poetry based on the deracinated and nation-less style of *modernismo*.

Given the possibilities of modern female sexuality, social controls were needed to channel these energies into productive social relations. As Wylan de la Peña notes, marriage for Balmori is used "as an instrument and institution in controlling women's sexuality" (48). But it is worth considering whether Augusto's death from does not suggest that the canalization of female

sexuality that De la Peña sees in the institution of marriage is not meant also to mark the limit of sexual dissipations for men. For if marriage to Ventura provides an alibi for Ángela's previous sexual dalliances with the poet, Augusto is offered no way out of his death through over-expenditure of breath and sex. The real scandal might be that Ángela gets away with the affair while Valdivia is sentenced to death.

In fact, this exposure of the ultimate artifice of marriage's respectability might be of a piece with the broader *modernista* concern with liberation from social constraint. As Jade has pointed out, in *modernista* writings, there is a "link between overt sexuality and the rejection of social constraints or religious formulas that failed to provide a satisfactory sense of order and tranquility" (70). This latter formulation clearly applies to Ángela's expressions of desire, which, whether for her first cousin, Ventura, or her paramour, Augusto, are illicit in the eyes of the church. And while the church is willing to provide a dispensation for the improper level of affinity between Ventura and Ángela—thus securing fortunes and power within the same family—the marriage act lends respectability to an otherwise illegitimate offspring.

This fear of indeterminable lineages seems to be at the base of Balmori's fear of English, as well. De la Peña points out that education and the English language in which it was conducted at the time often appear as means of defining and delineating gendered subjects in Balmori's novels. For women in *Bancarrota de almas*, De la Peña claims, "knowledge of English represents the ultimate capitulation to American-introduced cultural changes" (51). He points to a scene in which Don Alejandro, who represents the conservatism of an older, Filipino elite, claims that "los labios de la mujer Filipina [son] para besar, no para hablar el inglés... What!... what!... Así ladran los perros vagabundos" ("the lips of the Filipina woman are for kissing, not for speaking English... What!... what!... that is how street dogs bark") (Balmori 327, ellipses in

original). Though the unsympathetic portrayal of Don Alejandro does not suggest that these are, in any way, the beliefs of Balmori or his peers, the simile is telling of the threat imagined to reside in English-language instruction. The “street dogs” to which he compares women knowledgeable of English casts such “modern girls” as undomesticated and exposed to the public. They are ungovernable. Balmori links the foreseen extinction of Spanish under American Empire to the impossibility of governing the nation. As American English enters the world of his elite characters, their control over the future of the people comes undone. Augusto, rampant importer of foreign texts, dissipates himself in overexposure; Ventura, student of the United States’s new educational system, is cuckolded before he is even married; and Ángela, who holds the future in her womb, so to speak, is living a lie.

Balmori extends this argument for the centrality of women to the continued reproduction of society in a poetic joust—known as a *balagtasán*—from the 1920s. This duel, performed with his contemporary, Manuel Bernabé, is on the subject of women and men. In the *balagtasán*, Balmori rhapsodizes on the apparent motive force that women have in the social. Balmori, for example, claims that if a woman is a “humilde obrera” (“humble worker”), her work is nonetheless “el alma de la Fabrica entera” (“the soul of the entire Factory”) (qtd. in Brillantes 71).¹⁵ The woman as spirit of the factory is linked to the necessity of providing for the children of the home, thus linking (female) production in labor to reproduction of the family, since “¡La mujer es la vida! ¡Y la vida es amor!” (“Woman is life! And life is love!”) (71). The heteronormative reproduction of society rubs raw against the image of the laboring woman, who “en el taller de esteras o bordados prolijos, / Ciegos quedan [sus] ojos y [sus] gracias tronchadas” (“in the workshop of mats or meticulous embroideries, / their eyes go blind and their grace is cut

¹⁵ The orthography of the Spanish is from Brillantes, as I do not have access to originals to which to compare. The translation here, however, is my own.

short”) (71). The figure of the working woman is one of lamentation, even as it seems to be necessary to the “entire Factory.” Once again, the woman of modern economic systems is in contradiction with the requirements of physical reproduction, as the woman’s body deteriorates “¡Por llevar a [su] choza con las manos hinchadas / El arroz de [sus] hijos!” (“To bring to her hut with swollen hands / The rice for her children!”) (71).

Balmori here reproduces the trope of woman as prism through which value can be seen, but who herself seems incapable of determining value, much as I discussed in Retana’s “Por veinte pesos” (Chapter Three, above). Here, woman’s prismatic function is rendered through a metaphoric of salvation with a decidedly Christian flair (much as occurs with Augusto and Ángela): “¡La mujer es el angel que de niños nos guía, / Y de hombres nos levanta el alma a la poesía!” (“Woman is the angel who guides us as children, / And raises men’s souls to poetry!”) (71). Woman’s function in life, according to this poem, is to fill men with poetry, an act equivalent for the adult to the guidance given to children. Her role is thus to cause supersession of the (male) self, to bring out of the subject that towards which it intends, but which the subject cannot, it seems, achieve as *merely* the self. Woman is a catalyst for an act of becoming.

(It is perhaps in this sense that Bernabé’s response addressed to men insists on women’s superfluity:

La mujer es la luna bendecida,
el hombre el sol encima de la sierra;
la luna es el adorno de la vida,
pero el sol es la vida de la tierra.
[Woman is the blessed moon,
Man the sun upon the mountains;

The moon is the ornament of life,

But the sun is the life of the land.] [qtd. in Brillantes 73]

In stark opposition to Balmori's locating women as the animating force of production, Bernabé, conforming to the format of the joust, claims that the immaterial aspect of their labor that Balmori had praised—the aspect of the labor process that is in excess of mere reproduction, that is, the imagination [Marx, *Capital* 1:198]—is vain ornament. In order to claim this, Bernabé must resist the ultimate logic of capitalism as the subjectivization inherent in the labor process, a logic that suffuses Balmori's half of the duel. As a result, Bernabé suggests that women can survive off of men's labor in a gesture towards a non-capitalist idyll [73].)

In a very strange move, Balmori links the equation of woman as life to the Fil-Hispanic origins of his own poetry. Continuing his conceit of woman as life and life as love, Balmori exhorts

¡venga este amor de las Españas

Y lo bese mi Patria en su futura historia,

Bendita sea la madre, bendita sea la hija,

Y todas las mujeres que rasgan sus entrañas

Para cubrir al hombre de poesía y de gloria!

(Let this love come from the Spains

And kiss my *Patria* in her future history,

Blessed be the mother, and blessed be the daughter,

And all the women whose insides are gnawed

To cover the man of poetry and glory!) (72)

Invoking “las Españas” in this final section of the poem suggests that what gnaws at Filipina women now (i.e. hunger) is the result of the contemporary United States regime. The life of love for which the persona in this poem calls should redeem the *patria* (“homeland”) in the future past, an anterior time of retrospection in which, one presumes, these mothers and daughters will be blessed by plentiful food. In the meantime, however, the wealth of the nation is manifest in the poetry and glory of men, which survives at the expense (“cubrir,” in the sense of to pay for someone) of women under United States imperialism. Thus Fil-Hispanism as a cultural moment is bound to a contradiction: its cultural production comes at the cost of the impossibility of its social reproduction, as its florescence arises from the mulch of an empire dead and gone (along with its anemic capitalism and the lack of capital it allowed ethnic Filipinos such as the Ruiz and Valdivia families to control).

If capitalist labor marks one end of the Fil-Hispanic world, another end persists within the heart of the bourgeois home of Ángela. This is, of course, the indigenous languages, most notably in this novel that takes place in and around Manila, Tagalog. The limitations that Tagalog might place on Spanish become clear when Ángela asks her governess (*yaya*, in Tagalog and in the text) to tell her a story to distract her from her guilty feelings about Ventura. She narrates in “el dulce tagalo, idioma de su pueblo” (“the sweet Tagalog, language of her people”) (Balmori 96). Balmori here marks not the content of her story, but the manner in which it is recounted. Specifically, it is the linguistic register that ties together a community (*pueblo*) marked by “Tagalogness.”¹⁶

¹⁶ “Tagalogness” is one way to translate the word Balmori uses for Ángela’s cousin, Margarita, who secretes an “aire de tagalismo” (“air of Tagalogness”) (34). It is interesting to note that the more “Tagalog” Margarita quickly adopts marriage and the home as her field of action, while Ángela, who is noted for her “ojos rasgados,—dulcemente chinos” (“slanting eyes, sweetly Chinese”) (34), prefers a broader social space that she eventually must renounce. The Chinese reference is particularly glaring, and though I do not have the space to develop this here, see Caroline S. Hau, *The Chinese Question* for further discussion of the figure of the Chinese in modern Philippine society.

The story the governess tells concerns María Luz, a ray of sunshine, recalling the rays of sunlight figured in the cosmological figure of *liwanag*, which has been represented in Philippine national flags since the 1896 Revolution.¹⁷ Through this narrative, Balmori renders a constitutive outside to Spanish that nonetheless marks the inside of Tagalogness. By doing so, the Spanish-language writer participates in the same ideology expounded by his colleague, Fernando María Guerrero in an article from 1916. There, Guerrero posits Spanish itself as a source of pollution in a truly “Philippine” poetry. In “Formación de una Poesía Típicamente Filipina” (“Formation of a Typical Philippine Poetry,” capitalization in the original), Guerrero states that “la verdadera poesía indígena o filipina es la escrita en los idiomas y dialectos del país” (“the truly indigenous or Philippine poetry is that written in the languages and dialects of the country”) (24). He continues: “la musa de los poetas tagalos, bisayos, ilokanos, pampangos, etc., parece más incontaminada de ajenas influencias—españolas, francesas o sajonas—que la de los que se han educado en dichos idiomas europeos, o, por lo menos, han entretenido sus horas con la lectura y estudio de obras occidentales” (“the muse of the Tagalog poets, of the Visayan, Ilokano, Pampangan, etc., seems less contaminated from foreign influences—Spanish, French, or Saxon—than that of those who have been educated in these European idioms, or, at least, who have whiled away their hours in reading and studying Occidental works”) (24). The muse remains pure in Philippine poetry, but not in Spanish- or English-language literature from the Philippines, a curious position for a poet to take who wrote almost exclusively in Spanish. Guerrero suggests that both the Fil-Hispanic and the Fil-Anglo world are impositions on an interior (which might be designated *loob*) of Filipinoness that persists outside of historical contingency.

¹⁷ For more on this figure and its relation to Tagalog concepts of freedom and unity during the Revolution of 1896 and after, see Reynaldo Ileto (75-114).

The interiority posited by Guerrero and narrativized by Balmori in the nanny's story gives a glimpse of a world outside of the unification that Spanish (and then English) meant to achieve among the various groups that lived in the archipelago. In the Philippines, which to this day contains 78 languages and hundreds of dialects (Abinales and Amoroso 11), language is a particularly thorny problem in the construction of a single community. Édouard Glissant, theorizing the role of language in the identity of the world, claims that "every individual, every community, forms its own *échos-monde*, imagined from power or vainglory, from suffering or impatience" (Glissant 93). The *échos-monde* are images of the world as finite but infinitely replicable, like the nation in Benedict Anderson's formulation. Its enclosure bases itself on the knowledge of other *échos-monde*, which become visible at the moment a community feels itself either vulnerable to infection or assimilation, or capable of overpowering and absorbing another. In Balmori, the *écho-monde* of a Spanish *Filipinas* appears in its loss of power and with a longing for its restoration. Spanish, after all, was a language with the ambiguous position of being the primary language of the Philippine Assembly (established in 1907), but largely unknown to the United States Insular Government that held veto power over Assembly bills, as well as a language unknown by the mass of the Philippine population.¹⁸

It is in this confusion that the *écho-monde* of Balmori's novelistics was born and which gives it the resonance that it retains to this day. For *Bancarrota de almas* remembers an image of the world as complete, organized around a public morality guarded by the Catholic church and a near-total isolation by the colonial state.¹⁹ Balmori's complete world, however, mistakes its

¹⁸ Estimates on the percentage of the early twentieth-century population fluent in Spanish vary widely, in part due to inconsistent record-keeping under the Spanish Empire. Rafael has estimated no more than one percent of *indios* to have been fluent in the language at the time of the United States Census of the Philippines in 1903 (*Promise* 36). Anderson estimates 5%, although does not provide the grounds on which the estimate is based ("Hard" 254). Julian Go suggests 20% of Filipinos were literate according to the same Census, but does not specify in what language(s) (22), a problem seen in Montero y Vidal's assessment of Filipino literacy, discussed in Chapter Three, above.

¹⁹ See John D. Blanco, *Frontier* (64-94), and Josep M. Fradera, *Filipinas*.

organizing principle of Spanish culture for an inviolate source, and to the extent that foreign elements enter his purview, they are structurally destabilizing: the Yankee military band that interrupts Ángela's piano-playing and the introduction of (immoral) *modernista* literature into Ángela's world that temporarily seduce her away from her cousin, Ventura. The Philippine world of *Bancarrota de almas* presumes a hermeticism of national identity, despite the fact that "the outside—the world beyond the border, the cultural other outside the compact—is in fact always already inside, always already present in the very moment and process of national formation" (Cooppan xvii). Its violation is figured in the body of the modern Filipina woman, whose sexuality and education threaten the possibility of an organic, postcolonial nation.²⁰

On the Sea of Literature

Spanish-language literary aspirations can, arguably, be said to have peaked in the Philippines by 1930, when ninety authors, among them the most revered writers of the period, competed for the Premio Zóbel, "el más prestigioso galardón filipino para sus escritores en castellano" ("the most prestigious Philippine honor for its writers in Castilian") (Mariñas 71); by 1934, the same competition "had no grand winner" (although four authors shared honorable mentions) (Brillantes 115). At this point of proliferation under an English-speaking colonial bureaucracy, Spanish-language novels in the Philippines confront their own parochialism. Mariñas, for example, notes that the Premio Zóbel was founded at a time when "existía ya plena conciencia de que el español estaba en peligro ante el avance arrollador del inglés" ("existed already clear consciousness that Spanish was endangered by the irresistible advance of English") (84). Yet Spanish was the language in which most governmental business was conducted under

²⁰ On the organismic metaphor in postcolonial nationalism, see Pheng Cheah, *Spectral* (15-113), as well as Chapter One, above.

the United States regime, due to the education of the majority of political and economic elites in the Philippines at the time. Balmori was awarded the Zóbel (along with Manuel Bernabé) in 1926, and later in life served as a representative of the Philippine government in Spanish-speaking countries, eventually dying in Mexico.

Faustino Aguilar, who published the Tagalog-language *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos* in the same year as Balmori's *Bancarrota de almas*, also served in the Philippine government, although for much longer and in more varied capacities than Balmori's diplomatic career. Aguilar was a Director of Labor during the period of Insular Government (1902-34) and served in the Department of Labor during the Commonwealth period (1934-42), ultimately becoming the head of the Rural Progress Administration following Philippine independence in 1946. He was, in other words, heavily involved in the affairs of Philippine society, and the register of his papers made after his death contains many pages devoted to his correspondence with high-level Philippine officials (Library), including Manuel Quezon, the First President of the Philippine Commonwealth.

Aguilar's decision to write novels in Tagalog fits into his larger concept of the literary field. In a speech he gave before the National Language Institute in 1949, Aguilar compared literature to a sea ("karagatan") in which one finds oneself adrift. In order to steer oneself within this sea, he continues, one needs the most reliable tools. Therefore, "tayong mga pilipino ay may katungkulan ding mag-alay ng ating kaya sa dakilang gáwaing iyán, na ang sásangkapín ay hindî wikang hirám kundí ang sarili, na sinuso natin sa kasanggulán, inawit sa ating kabataan, ginamit sa paghanap ng katúbusan at sa ating kagulanga'y dapat na ihanap ng kapuriháng ikátatampók ng ating sariling bayan" ("we Filipinos have the obligation to dedicate our abilities to the task of that great project, in which the appropriate tool is not a borrowed language but our own, on

which we suckled as babes, which we sang in our youth, which we used in the search for redemption and which, in our maturity, we must find to exalt our honored country”) (*Pagkaunlad* 16).²¹ The educative role of language that knits the nation together is on display in this passage (Balibar, “Nation” 96-99), as is the heteronormative discourse of national reproduction by means of language (Spivak, “Nationalism” 288). At the same time as he reinforces the image of the national community as integral and founded on the point at which the subject as individual is socialized through language, Aguilar also offers the means by which this link becomes uncertain: the “borrowed language” (“wikang hiram”). In order to avoid the use of a less-familiar tool in the navigation of the sea of literature, Aguilar insists that Filipinos have the duty (“katungkulan”) to use the language(s?) in which they were raised, certainly a fascinating proposition in an archipelago with so many different spoken languages.

And yet, though the Filipino subject of Aguilar’s invective—here Aguilar uses “tayo,” the inclusive first-person plural, signifying himself and his auditors—was weaned on this national language, he cautions that the present state of it is not such that it can be used and recognized for literary purposes on a global stage. To extend his metaphor a bit, in the ocean of literature, there are some boats more seaworthy than others: “Kung ang kadakilaan ng wikà ng alín mang bansá ay kiníkilala at inuuri, hindi lamang sa kayamanang tagláy kundî sa kapakanáng sa kanyá’y nátatamó ng buong katauhan, ay dapat nating kilalaning hindi pa natin pinasísimulán ang mga hakbang na dapat isagawâ upáng ang wikà nating pambansá ay mápapantáy sa ibáng mga wikang tinítingalâ ngayón sa sansinukob” (“If the greatness of a language of a given country can be recognized and classified—not just in the richness it possesses but in the benefit gained by the entirety of humanity—we must acknowledge that we haven’t yet begun the steps that must be undertaken in order that our national language will be equal to the other languages admired in the

²¹ Citations from this speech reproduce the orthography of the original published version.

universe”) (10). Aguilar’s assessment of the state of Philippine literature in Tagalog might be seen as a response to the general impression that little literature of great significance was being produced in the indigenous languages or to the general impression of poor sales for printed material throughout the twentieth century.²² The vocabulary in which this sentiment is expressed, however, suggests that languages participate in a rivalry with all other languages, based on the overall relation of the individual to the language in which they labor, not merely its lexical richness or the sales-figures for its written texts. If, in fact, the greatness of a language *can be* classified, it is through something more than the words that it contains and the texts that utilize it. Rather, it is in a process of becoming a world that a language takes a place among those “admired in the whole universe.”

Sa Ngalan ng Diyos, though not Aguilar’s first novel,²³ is nonetheless telling for its construction of a world that is not dependent on a constitutive outside. In this chapter, it is also useful as a point of comparison to the end of Fil-Hispanism discussed in Balmori’s novel that came out the same year. How might a Filipino worldview (or, more precisely, a Tagalog worldview) after a decade of United States imperialism differ from the Fil-Hispanic one of Balmori? What is the process of subject formation in becoming “pilipino,” in Aguilar’s speech, versus “filipino,” in Balmori’s novel?²⁴

²² Aguilar notes, for example, that many early print-runs of Tagalog-language novels ended-up as wrapping paper in Chinese-run businesses (*Pagkaunlad* 7). The impression of underperformance of Tagalog-language literature in the market and the literary field is pervasive, such that Patricia May B. Jurilla, who works on the history of the book in the Philippines, can say, only half-sardonically, that “[t]here is a long-held notion in the Philippines that the only people who read local literary books are the same people who write them. This cannot be said to be entirely true (surely the families and friends of authors read their works, too)” (70). Jurilla, however, suggests an argument for reconsideration of literary value from a dialectic of language-use (Tagalog-language bestsellers and English-language “literary” fiction), an interesting proposition that remains a bit outside of the archive of this dissertation.

²³ *Pinaglahuan (Disappeared)* was released in 1907.

²⁴ *Pilipino* is sometimes used in place of *filipino*, since many of the Philippine languages, including Tagalog, do not distinguish between phonemes /p/ and /f/.

Sa Ngalan ng Diyos is a particularly useful comparison because, like *Bancarrota de almas*, the process of modern subject formation is traced across the figure of a woman. Aguilar's novel treats the infatuation of a Filipina heiress, Carmen, with a man from the United States, Mr. Roland, as well as the machinations deployed by a small group of Jesuits led by Padre Villamil to frustrate their romance in order to be the sole beneficiaries of her wealth. A central figure in the plots of the friars is the poorly educated Eladio Resurrección, who Padre Villamil introduces into Carmen's household as a servant in order to have Eladio spy on the budding relationship between Carmen and Mr. Roland. Eladio agrees, after a promise of education is extended to him by the Jesuits. However, after an ambiguous scene suggestive of an attempted rape against Carmen,²⁵ Eladio is sent away without the promised education. Carmen commits herself to being a nun and her wealth is entrusted to the Jesuits, all of which Eladio reads about in a letter from Padre Villamil. This letter infuriates Eladio, who now realizes his role in the underhanded dealings of the Jesuits. He returns to the Jesuit's estate and sets fire to the barn, with a grim image of friars praying for a salvation that never comes from the flames Eladio began (Aguilar, *Sa Ngalan* 150). In the end, however, the fire burns only the hay for the horses, Eladio is captured and imprisoned, and Carmen and Mr. Roland remain forever apart.

Soledad S. Reyes has suggested an autobiographical reading of Aguilar's oeuvre. Having tried in her introduction to purge her study of Tagalog novelistics of the "pamantayang Kanluranin" ("Western standard") by which most Philippine prosody is judged (vii), Reyes turns to historical experiences such as Aguilar's father's oppression at the hands of the clerical orders under Spanish dominion to support the study of novels such as *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos* outside of Western critical lenses (44). Shortly after this assertion, Reyes claims that "[a]ng paniniwala sa

²⁵ Roberto T. Añonuevo calls it a rape in his introduction to the novel (Aguilar, *Sa Ngalan* ix), although in my reading the scene is less clear.

nobela na ang personal na buhay ng mga indibidwal ay itinatakda ng materyal na pangangailangan sa lipunan ay isa pang impluwensiyang Kanluranin” (“another Western influence is the novelistic belief that the material necessities of society dictate the personal life of individuals”) (47). Here the belief in social processes’ effects on the individual is called a Western influence, yet a similar transparency between material history and the event (of individuality, of writing) is deployed as an explanatory mechanism in the origins of Aguilar’s novel by recourse to biographical influences.

This transparency seems to be an extension of Reyes’ perspicacious discussion of realism (*realismo*). Attempting to recover the term for an autochthonous critique of the Tagalog novel, Reyes defines “realismo,” in part, as the “matingkad na inilalarawan ang buhay sa isang tiyak na panahon, sa isang partikular na lipunan” (“vivid depicting of life in a specific time, in a particular society”) (42). What is more, she locates the origins of Tagalog novelistics within this epistemology of representation: “Pinagbukalan ng ganitong kalakaran sa nobela ang mga naunang akdang pampanitikan tulad ng mga nobela ni Rizal at mga tula ng Rebolusyon” (“This novelistic practice can be traced back to the very first literary works [*akdang pampanitikan*] such as the novels of Rizal and the poetry of the Revolution [of 1896]”) (42).²⁶ If the presumption of the representability of reality was not enough, then, realistic fiction makes a claim to value out of the representation of a *specific* reality. Realism (*realismo*) thus assumes the transferability and communicability of experience and this experience’s claim to value within society.

Yet a careful reading of Aguilar’s text might frustrate a bit in this regard. Unlike Balmori’s *Bancarrota de almas*, which uses real places located in Manila and the surrounding provinces, or José Rizal’s *Noli me tangere*, which uses a combination of real and fictional locations specified

²⁶ Reyes’s study is typical here in skirting around the colonial texts, mostly devotional, in various vernaculars that coincided with and even preceded Rizal’s novels. Cf. Mojares, *Origins*, and Blanco, *Frontier*, which have both tried to restore Tagalog texts that precede the *Noli* to Philippine literary historiography.

more or less in relation to real geography, Aguilar provides no clear indication of when or where *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos* takes place. As Roberto T. Añonuevo points out in his introduction to the contemporary reissue, “[a]ng mga pangyayaring itinuturing na totoo, alinsunod sa kasaysayan at sa pananaw ng historyador, ay nagbabanyuhay tungo sa antas ng haraya; at ang haraya'y nagiging realidad din alinsunod sa pananaw ng mga tauhang binigyang-buhay sa katha” (“the events considered to be true by history and in the view of historians approach the level of the imaginary; and the imaginary becomes real through the gaze of the characters given life in the novel”) (vi). In fact, Aguilar’s novel is a novel of interior states rather than external truths, and hardly touches on verifiable customs and habits of the Philippines, as others had done, in order to mine them for material or intellectual profit, or to turn such customs into a future community of belonging.²⁷ *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos* assumes from the start the profundity of Philippine subjects, their depth of feeling and irreducibility.

Interiority and Worlding

It is with this assumption that Aguilar’s depiction of literacy, writing, and language becomes clearly related to the production of subjectivity. The relationship between Carmen and the Jesuits, for example, is forever mediated by the books lent to her by Padre Villamil. As she says of her reading habits, “ako ay hindi nagbabasa ng anumang pahayagan o ni aklat na maiiba pa sa ipinagkakaloob sa akin ni Padre Villamil” (“I don’t read any newspapers or books not given [*ipinagkakaloob*] to me by Padre Villamil”) (22). The relationship is one predicated on (or imposed by) the restriction of information, a relationship in which the world (of texts) is determined at the discretion of the friars. An allegorical reading is certainly possible, one in

²⁷ These positions can be seen, respectively, in the work of José Montero y Vidal, W. E. Retana, and José Rizal; see Chapter Three, above.

which Carmen's role is equivalent to that of the Philippines under Catholic-Spanish obscurantism threatened by the arrival of the "Amerikano." Beyond that, however, is a comment on the ways in which the world appears and is constructed in modernity through the circulation of linguistic artifacts.

The contrast between Catholic-Spanish and "Amerikano" is precisely between the relation of the individual to the world and the question of education. Padre Villamil provides Carmen with texts by Thomas à Kempis that, according to Carmen, "parang palaging tinatawagan ang puso ng bumabasa at hindi ang pag-iisip" ("always seem like they are calling to the heart of the reader, not to their thoughts") (23). Later, when Eladio tells his girlfriend, Dure, that he will leave their island retreat in order to return to the Jesuit's domain, she "hindi nakaimik, luha na lamang, malinaw na tubig ng puso, ang nagpahayag ng kaniyang dinaramdam" ("couldn't respond [*hindi nakaimik*], only tears, the clear waters of the heart, the expression [*nagpahayag*] of her feelings") (146). The heart is called and responds to instruments other than the language of scheming and debt, of proportion and weight, in which Padre Villamil plots. Its language is distinct, clear, and unmediated by thought. There is a language of tears and feelings that bypasses the ratiocination in the mind (*isip*).

What is heard in the heart is a feeling of sharedness that penetrates deeper than mere surface and affects the inner most aspects (*loob*) of a person. Both Carmen and Dure experience these moments of connection in near silence: Carmen in the act of reading, Dure due to her depression-induced inability to speak. In the absence of sound, they are called by objects to account of themselves in a language without words. It is an expression of *pakikiramdam*, of shared feeling between things, as Alejo would say. There, "ang nag-uugnayan ay loob sa kapwa loob. Maaaring makatulong ang anyo at tunog, subalit may isang uring ugnayan na loob-sa-loob"

(“what interconnects is inside [*loob*] of another’s interiority [*loob*]. The appearance and sound may help in the interconnection, but there is another connection that is interior-to-interior”) (77). That Dure’s tears mediate her *loob* to the *loob* of another person (Eladio), while Carmen’s response to a book is irrelevant, as *pakikiramdam* expresses a spatial relation from *loob* to *labas*, from inside to outside (Alejo 69-70). *Pakikiramdam* as shared feeling is thus the connection that the interior has with all things that exist materially and immaterially, in that it is an expression of the interior at the same time that it impresses upon it. It is the potential for sharedness. The spatiality of *loob* is thus a orientating interiority, with what Alejo calls “lawak, lalim, at laman” (“extent, depth, and substance”), though these three cannot be separated in experience (72). *Loob*, then, is a textuality, a readable relation and interpretable object at the same time; it is, in other words, the aesthetic as I have been discussing it in this dissertation.²⁸

Interestingly, the texts that Carmen notes as appealing to the *puso* (“heart”) are the same that were *ipinagkakaloob* (“given”) to her. The latter term derives from the root word “loob,” one of the most fecund words in Tagalog,²⁹ and is composed of the root “kaloob” (gift) and the affix “ipag-” (a verbal affix connoting the receiving of the texts).³⁰ *Kaloob* is a gift that expresses a particular generosity; one of Alejo’s definitions for it is “pagpapadama ng pagmamahal sa pamamagitan ng isang bagay na mahalaga sa nagbibigay” (“expression [lit. “making to be felt”] of love by means of something precious to the giver”) (139). Thus *kaloob* (and its homonym, *ka-loob*, meaning someone with whom feeling is shared [*kapwa*]) implies a bringing together of

²⁸ Textuality in this sense overlaps with Spivak’s in “Scattered,” a concept that I discuss in the Introduction, above. *Loob*’s characteristics, as described by Alejo (69-72), are also reminiscent of Hayot’s six aspects of worldliness (54-88).

²⁹ Alejo has collected 288 distinct words and phrases that incorporate *loob* in diverse meanings (135-51). The following section relies on Alejo’s glossary as well as the Tagalog-English dictionary of L. English. I also received additional grammatical assistance from Richard Atienza.

³⁰ In the form given, “ipinagkakaloob,” the “-in-” affix is a verbal marker of time that indicates an action has commenced, while the reduplication of the first syllable of the root indicates that the action continues indefinitely into the future, i.e. that the verb “ipagkaloob” is in the incompleted aspect (loosely understood as “present tense”) in Carmen’s sentence, above.

multiple *loob*, a co-interiorization produced by means of the gift. To give (*ipagkaloob*) is to impel the recipient to recognize (*tanggapin*, also “to admit [the truth of something]”) the giver’s true self (*loob*), to unify at the level of *loob* both parties to the exchange. It is the same pattern that structures the common phrase “utang na loob,” most often translated into English as “debt of gratitude,” but more literally “debt of/from the inside.” The debt of/from the inside is a debt that is not to be repaid but recognized, accepted, the truth of which must be admitted (all possible meanings of the root word *tanggap*) (Alejo 151). The debt that Padre Villamil seeks to contract with Carmen thus evades the mediation of the inside and outside accorded to thought (*pag-iisip*, from *isip*, “mind, the intellect, reason”) by calling directly to the heart (*puso*), which speaks its own “clear” (*malinaw*) and empathetic (*nagpapadama*) language.

Alejo has claimed that “ang salitang ‘puso’ ay unti-unting pinanghinawaan ng ilang alagad ng panitikan samatalang nagsisimula namang matuon ang pansin ng ilang mananaliksik sa kakaibang salitang ‘loob’” (“the word ‘puso’ [heart] was slowly drained [of meaning] by the literary establishment, while the sight of some experimenters began to settle on a different word, ‘loob’ [interiority]”) (58). Citing an interview he conducted with the Philippine National Artist for poetry, Virgilio Almario, Alejo suggests that this occurred over the course of the 1960s, with the “pagdating ng higit na rasyonal at ideolohikal na pag-iisip” (“arrival of a more rational and ideological thought”) (58). While the cause offered by Alejo might be disputed (what thought is *not* ideological?), the historico-philological dimension that he adds to the use of the term *loob* in Tagalog society seems highly apt. In Carmen’s devotion to the priests that seek to limit her knowledge by repeated calls to the heart (“puso”), Aguilar critiques how the heart is, as Alejo says, “laging kakawing sa higit na emosyonal na kalagayan ng tao” (“always linked to the overly

emotional condition of people”) (58). The heteronomy that results is what Aguilar seeks to exorcise from the Filipino people through his novel.

The heteronomy to which the *puso* lends itself are clear in the earlier intrigue of Padre Villamil. In talking with the priest who first informs him of Carmen’s infatuation with the American, Padre Villamil says he will make it appear that, between Mr. Roland and Carmen, “hindi ang kanyang puso ang tinutudla ng Amerikano . . . kung hindi ang kanyang supot” (“not her heart for which the American is aiming, but her wallet”) (3). Padre Villamil’s ascription of a material motive to Mr. Roland, however, only provides evidence of his own materialist frame of mind, as his concerns quickly turn to Carmen’s inheritance. The heart, he suggests, is the easiest target of his machinations, but not his true aim, which is material wealth.³¹ In order to turn Carmen away from Mr. Roland, Padre Villamil seeks to enter her through a gift that speaks to the heart. Rather than convince her with reason, he seeks to reason a way to convince her heart. In this formula, the heart (*puso*) seems not to distinguish between inside (*loob*) and outside (*labas*), and, as a result, subjects the self (*sarili*) to heteronomy. The *puso*, then, towards which Padre Villamil aims, is the opposite of the *pag-iisip* (“thought”), not of the *supot* (“wallet”).

If the heart’s “overly emotional” position is the easiest target of manipulation, thought proves the greatest site of possible resistance. In an excoriation of the new cult of the individual that arrives with the *mga Amerikano* (“Americans”), Padre Villamil cites thought as the medium through which faith in the old order is weakened:

Ang bagong mga akala, ang bagong mga kuro, lalong-lalo na ang masidhing
paglingap sa sarili, paris ng tinutuntong halimbawa na pagdalangin sa *ako* ng mga
Amerikano ay nagwawalat ng pananampalataya. Ang *sarili* at *ako* ay mabuting

³¹ This could be the case for the writings of Thomas à Kempis, as well, with the ultimate aim of his texts not the *supot* but the soul.

panuntunan kung ang lahat sana’y natatapos na sa buhay na ito, ngunit may nalalabi pa pagkatapos ng kamatayan at ito’y ang langit o ang impiyerno, ang kaligtasan o ang pagkapahamak ng walang katapusan. (24)³²

(New ideas, new beliefs, and especially the intense care of the self, which proceeds like an American prayer to the *I*, is destroying faith. The *self* and the *I* are fine principles, if all that is hoped for has its ends in this life, but something still remains after death, which may be either heaven or hell, salvation or damnation without end.)

The final sentence is revealing, as the fear of the “intense care [*masidhing paglingap*] of the self” is a fear of a secularized world, a world in which the ends are imminent in objects themselves, not in the *nalalabi*, the remains, the residue, and, in this context, the afterlife. In fact, the “I” to which *mga Amerikano* offer their prayers is a subject positioned within the world, rather than outside of it.

To be in the world does not mean only to exist physically in it, for this, in fact, is how the friars would desire Carmen and Eladio to live. If *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos* ends in a struggle between Eladio and the friars, it is not because they have different concepts of world, but because their concepts are too similar. For both, the world “ay nag-aalok ng mga posibilidad para sa ikagaganap ng kanyang nilolob” (“offers possibilities to realize what is in one’s mind”) (Alejo 89). The world is a field (*larangan*) of action, the possibility for action itself. In Padre Villamil’s plan to contain Eladio—through introducing him into Carmen’s household, restricting his actions with the promise of education, exiling Eladio when his will (*loob*) expresses itself in an assault on Carmen—the friar’s desire is to render Eladio an instrument and thereby strip him of his subjectivity. To take away his will would reduce him to a state of immobility: “Ang taong

³² Here the text cited is that of the 2004 edition, although I have retained the italicization of the 1911 edition.

nawalan ng loob ay wala nang daigdig na magagalawan, walang bukas na larangang maaari niyang pakipagsapalaranan” (“A person who has lost their will [*nawalan ng loob*] no longer has a world in which to move, does not have an open field in which to venture”) (Alejo 89). This is, of course, exactly what Padre Villamil wants, and why Eladio is physically removed to a tiny island. Eladio’s insistence on returning to the friars’ estate, *despite* Dure’s tears, is, in turn, a rejection of the condition of alienation³³ under which the friars would place him. For any sense of justice, the novel must insist that the unlettered peasant, Eladio, has as much of a world as the inheritor of Spanish colonialism, Padre Villamil. Eladio Resurrección must be capable of renewing himself.

It is with this understanding of “world” in *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos* that the possible course of action for women in Aguilar’s novel can be taken into consideration. As in *Bancarrota de almas*, the novel’s main discourses on women are placed on the lips of characters of greater or lesser sympathy, but without authoritative tones. After Carmen enters the monastery, an unnamed relative of hers says, “kung pagbabanal din lamang ang layon, ay lalong mabuting maging banal dito sa labas, halimbawa sa pagiging ina ng naggagandahang sanggol at huwag doon sa nakukulong ng mga bakod na batong ang kapararakan lamang ay maging kublihan ng lahat nilang ginagawa” (“if piety is the only goal, it’s even better to become pious on the outside [i.e. outside of the monastery], for example, by becoming the mother of a beautiful baby, and not moored within those stone walls that conceal all that they do”) (138). The options available to Carmen in this relative’s account are asymmetrical even as they both turn away from the world as a field-of-action. In the monastery, the self is turned towards god. In the process, actions are hidden from view, undisclosed. The relative’s critique seems to be as much of the concealment

³³ Of alienation (*pagkatiwalag* or *alyenasyon*), Alejo says it is “ang bunga ng labis na pagsasamantala: na ang biktima ay nagiging bagay na lamang na walang makataong loob” (“the result of excessive exploitation: that a victim becomes a mere thing without human will [*makataong loob*]”) (91).

that takes place as of any actions themselves, perhaps because those actions cannot be discovered. The relative offers an alternative form of piety in the maternal reproduction of society. Becoming a mother opposes retreat to the monastery in that it maintains genealogical descent as the order of social existence. In this, Aguilar's novel comes to resemble Balmori's, which turned to the family as an escape from the tribulations of modernity.

In the Name of God

Balmori's novel can be seen as a crisis of a colonial modernity in the Philippines, or, perhaps more accurately, a crisis in the colonial experience of "the Western culture of imperial modernity" (Mrázek ix). For in the dissolution of the Fil-Hispanic world represented in *Bancarrota de almas* can be seen the twentieth-century's "starting point of articulation, which is precisely the identification of the irreducible *difference* between conditions obtaining on the colonial frontier and in the metropolitan state" (Blanco, *Frontier* 277). It is a difference that, for Balmori, suggests that the seductive world of modern women in the Philippines will end in social anomie or even death. No one in the rarefied world of the Philippine middle and upper classes represented in *Bancarrota de almas* can convincingly lead the way out of their genuine social bankruptcy, neither men nor women, liberals nor conservatives.

Aguilar offers something else, or, rather, admits the possibility that someone else may have an answer. In *Sa Ngalan ng Diyos*, the final chapters see Eladio seeking a new society that will be based not on an economy of debts and *puso*, but on one of transvaluation. This can be seen after Eladio discovers the fate of Carmen in the letter of Padre Villamil, when he turns to the curious figure of *utang* to explain his emotions: "Magbayad ang may utang" ("Debtors must pay"), he tells himself, "ngunit dapat na magbayad sa lalong madaling panahon" ("and must pay

quickly”) (145). As becomes clear, it is not the debt he might appear to owe to Carmen for his sins against her chastity, but rather the “debts” incurred by the (false) generosity of the Jesuits. This debt, Eladio imagines, can only be repaid with fire. Curiously, Eladio links his own “debts” to a divine economy ruled over by “ang Diyos mang sakdal bait ay puno ng kaawaan, palibahasa’y bagot na sa kanilang mga likong kagagawan ay hindi rin makikinig” (“an extremely gentle God, full of pity, who, due to his exasperation at their [i.e. the friars’] crooked handiwork, no longer listens”) to the prayers of the Jesuits (150). Here, god is imagined as returning in inverted form what those who claim god’s name give, namely, impatience for selfishness, pity for grace. One’s actions in the world return to them through a process of valuation in which one *gets* what one *gives*, not necessarily what one desires or earns. Unlike the instrumentalist logic of Padre Villamil’s plan, this logic determines the point of valuation outside of the human, in a point of determination labelled “god.”

Eladio’s god, then, contrasts with that of the Jesuit’s, who gives to those who would take. To the extent that the friars claim to be committed to god, their god is one in which the ends of human action justify whatever schemes (*mga panukala*) might be employed in obtaining them. In a final speech he makes to Padre Villamil, Eladio justifies his actions by calling on the name of God:

Sa ngalan ng inyong Diyos ay sinira ninyo ang pag-iibigan ni Carmen at ni Mister Roland, sa ngalan ng inyong Diyos ay niluoy ninyo ang mga pag-asa ni Carmen hanggang sa siya’y maipasok sa monasteryo, sa ngalan ng inyong Diyos, ako ay inyong kinasangkapan sa mga lihim na pakana, at sa ngalan ng inyong Diyos ay pinaglaruan ninyo ang aking kapalaran. Kaya sa ngalan naman ng aking Diyos, ako ay gumanti. (157)

(In the name of your God, you have spoiled the love of Carmen and Mister Roland, in the name of your God, you have withered the dreams of Carmen so that she has entered the monastery, in the name of your God, you embroiled me in secret schemes, and in the name of your God, you have toyed with my fate. So, in the name of my God, I have taken revenge.)

The verb *gumanti*, which is rendered here as “to take revenge,” invokes response and retaliation, as well return and recompense. It is to give as one gets. Eladio thus enacts the god in which he believes, a god that returns—eye for eye and pound for pound—that which has been done in his name. The name of god is thus a transcendental signifier for the economy of exchange, one through which one’s actions in life are transcoded into the rewards one receives in this same world, rather than the hereafter (*nalalabi*). It is to use up life completely, so that there will be nothing left (*nalalabi*). God is that which authorizes and engages circulation and transcodes metaphorical (or metaphysical) destruction with physical destruction. To this extent, Eladio must be jailed, but not for his setting of a fire that injured no one. Rather, his jail time is just recompense for his refusal to acknowledge the proper claims of Carmen (over herself) and Dure (over him).

The divine economy that structures Eladio’s interpretation of Philippine society mirrors that which operates in that most famous of Philippine novels, Rizal’s *Noli me tangere*. As Blanco has pointed out, it is “[t]he contraction of debts” and the “ongoing attempt to fulfill them [that] forms the general *modus operandi* central to the novel” (“*Economium*” 378). But whereas in the *Noli*, the debts contracted by characters are the result of a “moral decision . . . to break with one cycle of debt and announce the coming of another,” one that will be “consecrated only by each other” (384), in Aguilar they are returned to a singular source, “Diyos,” god, but a god distinct

from that of the Spanish friars. In fact, it is a god with whom only Eladio seems to be in communion, Eladio the peasant, Eladio the unlettered, Eladio the (potential) sinner.

It is here that Aguilar so precisely inverts what Blanco sees as the new ethical relation of the Philippines inaugurated by Rizal. Blanco highlights the generality of the histories initiated by Rizal as histories of an absent source: “The members of Rizal’s community are not based upon a common ground, but the absence of one. The history to which they belong is not only a cosmopolitan one, but one that does not consist of nations that possess the singular qualities of specific, individual, inevitably original histories” (“*Economium*” 375).³⁴ In fact, this history comes as a gift, as an effect without source; or, as Blanco states, “the mystery of the gift is in fact the gift itself” (400). The *Noli* would thus establish the potential for a society without prescribed coordinates. And yet the open-ended gift of immanence in the *Noli* operates through the production of difference, and the gift of modern national community that Blanco sees operating in Rizal is produced only through the interiorization of debt as obligation *to*. It is, in other words, a non-specific sense of duty that must be cultivated in the national subject, perhaps through the apparatus of the Rizaline education analyzed by Caroline Hau (*Necessary*). Through a decree of the Philippine state, Rizal returns as the origin of this national community, “one of the first people from Filipinas to find, imagine, or conceive the possibility of a root, of rootedness or perhaps radicality on an ethical level” (Blanco, “*Economium*” 396). Rizal becomes, again, the “first Filipino” (Leon Guerrero).

Eladio’s response to the crisis of debt is refusal of an economy of gains made through secrecy and plots initiated by the friars and the assumption of a divine economy based on

³⁴ The famous speech that encodes this for Blanco is given by the character Elias in the *Noli* and runs as follows: “¡Muero sin ver la aurora brillar sobre mi patria ...! vosotros, que la habeis de ver, saludadla... no os olvideis de los que han caido durante la noche!” (“I die without seeing the dawn break on my country... You who are about to see it, greet her... do not forget those who have fallen during the night!”) (Rizal, *Noli* 349/421); cf. Blanco, “*Economium*” (380).

democratic values. Eladio's economy thus recalls Kant's categorical imperative ("I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law" ["Groundwork" 57]), while announcing a democratic regime, in that this economy "exists where self-limitation is the only 'norm,' where transgressed 'limits' are nowhere defined" (Castoriadis 115).³⁵ The perplexing aspect of Eladio's economy is the fate of Carmen, for her self-exile in the convent is not a response to her own actions. Yet if we consider Carmen's wealth and the destitution from which Eladio is pulled into the machinations of the priest, the inheritance that the friars want so desperately to claim comes to look like a family crime against social equality. Eladio's economy thus appears to be a specifically non-capitalist economy, or even anti-capitalist, in that the goal is a type of justice that requires economic equity.³⁶

In both Balmori's and Aguilar's texts, language comes to be the domain through which competing literary spheres stage their difference. As Balmori and Aguilar make clear, it is not language as transparent medium, but language as world-making, as a production of the relations between subjects and the societies they inhabit and create. For Balmori, such linguistic making seems already doomed from the tensions of colonial society, the pan-Hispanism loosely posited failing to hold at bay the sounds of the Yankee military. In Aguilar's text, the ambiguous position of the reader posits a necessary ethical response in relation to the friars' machinations and Eladio's imprisonment: will the world in which you live and to which language returns you be one structured in injustice or will it be one in which god's name serves to grant pity and benefit on the poor and the weak? In other words, will the "world" of world literature continue to be dominated by the material relations of the "globe" of globalization?

³⁵ Castoriadis here is speaking of *hubris* as the essential element of a democratic regime.

³⁶ The missing component here is Dure, whose "clear" and empathetic language of tears goes unrecognized by Eladio in his hubris (lack of self-limitation). Must it be said that had his heart been reached by her tears, there might have been another possible future?

Conclusion

On the horizon of these novels is the geopolitics that would culminate in the First World War, a cataclysm that held out for some Filipinos the promise of equality and democracy, since the material and personnel support of countries such as the Philippines was readily solicited by the great powers of the Global North in their fight against German expansion. Gregorio Nieva, a member of the Philippine Assembly established by the United States government, broached geopolitics as a question of language in an article published simultaneously in English and Spanish in January 1916. It thus appeared the same year that the United States Congress passed the Jones Act, which set out parameters for Philippine independence based on an indefinite and highly subjective series of benchmarks. Nieva's English-language essay, titled "English or Spanish? or Pan-American-Anglo-Hispanism?," signals in the final compound word a proposed synthesis of Philippine history. Nieva defines this unwieldy neologism as "a union of hearts and brains" that will, "in time, do away with dividing racial lines, under the powerful and pleasant influence of democratic brotherhood in the countries concerned, all under the protective and equalizing mantle of a community of interest and a common cause" ("English" 8). Nieva thus poses "Pan-American-Anglo-Hispanism" as a unique outgrowth of Philippine history and an antidote to the racial tensions that riddled colonial society under what Paul Kramer has called "inclusionary racism" (194).

The urgency of this need is not only a result of the daily racial tensions in the Philippines discussed by Kramer, but a response to calls in the Philippines for volunteers to wage war on the side of the United States. As Nieva says, the "great war," as he already calls it, "is conclusively demonstrating the helping value, under certain circumstances, of even the least important power,

and that the support of a small country is just as earnestly solicited as a great one's" ("English" 8). In other words, "small countries" like the Philippines—so denominated, presumably, because of their continued domination by foreign powers—are equally ready to act on the stage of world affairs as the "great" countries. Nieva here argues for the "assistance" that a "small country" can provide to solving the social ills that had drawn its "big brother" protector into a global catastrophe.³⁷

The Spanish version of the article provides some interesting nuance to the picture painted by the English version. For starters, the vision is rendered a bit more theologically, where the "union of hearts and minds" in English becomes "una gran comunión internacional" ("a great international communion") (Nieva, "¿Inglés?" 10). In its internationalism, this sacred communion is also haunted by the Communist International (in turn haunted by the announced coming of an international solidarity of workers foreseen by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*),³⁸ and seems to contrast with the English formulation's emphasis on the interiority of feeling. Perhaps even more interestingly, the phrase used for what, in English, is called "a small country" is, in Spanish, "un pueblo pequeño" (Nieva, "¿Inglés?" 10), rather than the politico-territorial "país" or the politico-genealogical "nación." "Pueblo," after all, can refer to both a "town" and a "people," in both senses implying a certain sense of immanence.

Ten years after Nieva's article, and fifteen after Balmori's novel, Antonio M. Abad would finish *La oveja de Nathán* (*Nathan's Sheep*), a highly allegorical *bildungsroman* about a Filipino who joins the United States military to fight in World War I for the principles of democracy and freedom. He is motivated, in part, by his belief in the United States's promise to grant independence to the Philippines as noted in the preamble (but not the actual bill) of the Jones Act

³⁷ I am punning here off of the metaphor of the "little brown brother" that was commonly deployed in the United States' depiction of the Philippines; see Kramer (159-228).

³⁸ On communist internationalism as a particular "haunting" of global capitalism, see Derrida, *Specters*.

of 1916. The daily cosmopolitanism that Balmori saw as a dead-end is transformed in *La oveja de Nathán* by traditional families and an (Anglo) modernist emphasis on free indirect discourse and unstable perspectives quite outside the dynamics of elite society and *modernismo* in *Bancarrota de almas*. It is tempting to see in Abad's novel a Spanish-language opportunity for the type of Philippine worlding seen in Aguilar's novel, as it opens up an entire world for *pakikipagsapalaran* ("adventure"). And yet the gender divide evident in Aguilar and which Balmori seemed to be trying to reinstitute is strong in *La oveja de Nathán*. Abad's women are chaste and virtuous, extravagantly stoic in the face of male hubris and exploitation. The promise of the organic nation-state, which requires a political liberation absent from the scene of Balmori's *modernista* morality, returns to Abad as the modern woman of the streets is replaced by a traditional woman of the house.

In *La oveja de Nathán*—which was offered for consideration to the Zóbel committee in 1926 but deemed too political for consideration³⁹—descent and language are clearly defined as the "eje de dignidad nacional" ("axis of national dignity") through the figure of Mr. Moore (Abad 392).⁴⁰ A United States citizen who came to the Philippines as a soldier during the Philippine-American War but who became "un verdadero amante del país" ("a real lover of the country") (392), Mr. Moore marries a member of the Visayan elite. As a result, his son, who he calls by the Spanish name Jorge, but who is called George by Mr. Moore's Spanish-speaking wife, is raised in three languages: "el inglés, que usaba cuando hablaba con su padre, el castellano, heredado de su madre, y el bisaya, con que se había entender a duras penas de la nodriza y de los criados" ("English, which he used when talking to his father; Spanish, inheritance from his mother; and Visayan, with which he made himself understand, at great

³⁹ It nonetheless tied for first place in the Zóbel awards three years later, in 1929, a situation that helped ignite a minor controversy in literary circles in Manila (Brillantes 88-95).

⁴⁰ Though I cite the recent bilingual edition of Abad's text, I have retranslated the citations that I use here.

pains, with the nanny and the servants”) (240). Jorge/George often mixes the three up, producing sentences such as “Daddy, muy juguete giperde ni mamay...” (“Daddy, the nanny lost my toy”) and “Kagahapon I saw a dog grande como casa” (“Yesterday I saw a dog as big as a house”) (240).⁴¹ The Babelic scion suggests the perils of the global histories that traverse the Philippines. No language purist, Jorge/George may represent the promise of a future in which Filipinos of all backgrounds may be united in their common ideas, or the dire warning of an inarticulate dissonance to come.

Across these three novels, Philippine letters seem desirous of creating a certainty that escapes the reality that they depict. Balmori’s novel predicts disease and degeneration as the consequence of freedom of movement, even as it opens up a world in which (elite) women can act within the modern landscape of the United States empire. Aguilar’s and Abad’s novels both vie with the class structure inherited from Spain and the United States to open up the field of action for a broader swath of Filipino men and thereby engage the problematic of freedom, but at the cost of the cloistering or maternalization of women. The claim of these novels on the world of literature is made through the literary worlding through which they represent both a concept of world and a view of the actually existing globe,⁴² but in the process they (re)produce other differences of gender that must be managed and contained. Neferti Tadiar has written that “[l]iterary works are figurations of possibilities of life that authors exercise in their imaginations of historical experience” (17-18). The partiality, then, of these figurations is conditioned by the actually existing social divisions, as well as the particular stances on these divisions and their articulation through which the imagination conceives of them. While these novels, taken together, reveal the debate over literary and aesthetic subjectivities taking place in the aftermath

⁴¹ These translations are approximate, given the ungrammatical nature of the originals. My thanks to Karl Alcover for assistance with these passages.

⁴² This is how Hayot distinguishes “the world” as two separate objects of study within literary studies (23-29).

of the end of the Spanish Empire and the beginnings of United States Empire, their articulation into broader debates of world literature risk producing other exclusions for which they cannot account.

Conclusion

World literature as catachresis, world literature as the impossibility of literature itself.

Thus far, this project has only investigated an experience of the literary within the aesthetic-imperial regime established by the expansion of global capitalism in the nineteenth century in the island colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines. It has extended these insights to the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as, in the final chapter, exposing some of the resistances to this regime that developed under new political economies. Alternative mediations of subjectivity and the social—that is, experiences of being bound differently than the dominant theorizations of the subject—have not been addressed here in more than a passing manner.¹ One crucial area that should be explored in the future is how aesthetic theories within dominated sites and dominated sectors of society have participated in or challenged the aesthetic-imperial regime that I have explored here. How can aesthetics liberate, as Terry Eagleton wonders in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, especially in areas where liberation is not a matter of liberalism, but of a continuing need for economic and political survival? What role might aesthetics—as a domain in which everyday experience takes shape as the interface of the individual with the social—play in the development of alternative ways of living? How might aesthetics—as a technology for the production of Enlightenment subjects—provide opportunities for the autonomous mobilization and self-organization of non-national literary subjectivities?

¹ Neferti Tadiar sets a precedent for how the differently bound subject becomes available to capitalism, as well as what “falls away” in that binding (*Things*).

Undoubtedly, one place to begin such investigations will be in the literary and artistic output of the Filipino and Puerto Rican diasporas, both of which are large enough to set new parameters on the concept of “national” belonging. S. Lily Mendoza acknowledges this as the frame of her investigation in *Between the Homeland and the Diaspora*, noting that what seems to link communities in the Philippines and the Filipino-American community so tightly is “their tenuous and contentious connection to a common third term: the United-States—at once a site of desire(ing) as well as of lingering colonial shadows and ambivalences” (xxv).² No less can be said of Puerto Rico, which, if anything, has a more complicated history of entanglements and betrayals (Sánchez-González; Soto-Crespo). The placement of these texts in relation to and contrasting with “national” literatures in critical writings and syllabi will help to disorder and recode the role of these texts in nationalist imaginaries as well as imaginaries of the shape of the world and its relationship to the globe.

The limit of theorizations of world literature is generally their practicability in the classroom. Methods for engendering more rigorous world-literary studies often include the prescription for more collaboration (Damrosch 285-86), a greater investment in theories of translation (Apter, whose emphasis on untranslatability is based on an underlying theory of translation itself), or a thicker understanding of non-hegemonic cultures (Spivak, *Death*). In the undergraduate classroom, all of these seem both essential and impossible, due to the limits on time and money that plague all universities in the contemporary United States, and especially the public ones in which I have received my education.

My dissertation has focused on texts from the “peripheral” sites of Puerto Rico and the Philippines, but, as should be clear by now, their very peripherality is why they must be at the

² For how the connection is figured as distinct for Filipinos in the United States and Filipinos working abroad (so-called Overseas Filipino Workers, or OFWs), see Benito Vergara, particularly Chapters Two, Five, and Six.

center of a reconceptualization of world literature. That many of these texts are not translated into English and most are not currently in print poses a dilemma to the efficacy of this project: How can the revaluation of these texts occur when they cannot be used in a classroom or effectively disseminated to scholars? Therefore I offer as a final word on the practicability of an impossible world literature a proposal for an upper-division course on European literature.

C LIT 320 in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Washington carries the title “Studies in European Literature,” and is described in the course catalog in these vague terms: “Examination of the development of European literature in a variety of genres and periods. Possible areas of study include literature from romantic fiction of early nineteenth century through great realist classics of second half of the century or from symbolism to expressionism and existentialism” (“C LIT 320”). The lack of specificity allows maximum instructor freedom, while also ensuring students a wide variety of possible ways of studying the putative topic of “European literature.” One could design a class for this course title that would be framed by much of the secondary works in this dissertation, focusing on the dialectic of cosmopolitanism and custom in the nineteenth century. The primary texts for the course could draw from Emilia Pardo Bazán (Spain), Eugène Sue (France), and Rudyard Kipling and George Orwell (Great Britain). Many of the most important texts from these authors are not available in contemporary English-language editions, but translations and editions exist online, through sites such as Google Books (<http://books.google.com>) and The Gutenberg Project (<http://www.gutenberg.org>). Excerpts and shorter pieces can, as has been common practice for decades, be photocopied and compiled into readers (physical or electronic).

Such online archives and physical reproductions, however, will do little to decrease the impenetrability of these texts without the in-depth contextualization necessary to make legible

texts by Sue (whose *Les Mystères de Paris* [*The Mysteries of Paris*] has not been translated in a century), or to make meaningful texts by Orwell (born in British India, and a colonial policeman in British Burma before becoming a full-time writer). Likewise, the racist cosmopolitanism of Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" will be greatly enhanced by the counterpoint of Mark Twain's essay "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," as the former elegizes the British Empire's passing the torch of domination to the United States, while the latter satirizes this grim relay. To cap the course off, a turn to Philippine National Hero José Rizal's *Noli me tangere* would be most fitting, as this work, more than perhaps any other in European literature, encapsulates the "demonio de las comparaciones" (Rizal, *Noli* 43), or "demon of comparisons," that bedevils the cosmopolitan project and its incapacity to overcome local habits and customs. Composed in Castilian Spanish, primarily while Rizal resided in Paris, the novel was published in Berlin. The brilliant text of a Southeast Asian, the *Noli* stands as the *summa* of European literature, with its sources in Sue's *Les Mystères*, its antagonism to the imperial morality of Pardo Bazán, and its prefiguring of the social cataclysm that would unleash the forces of the Philippine Revolution of 1896, which would be brutally manipulated by the United States into a cry for colonial correction, a manipulation that was simultaneously rhapsodized by Kipling and satirized by Twain. In such a class, "European literature" would metamorphose from a geographically defined canon of texts into an analytic category for the construction of lines of force and vectors of historical convergence. The keywords "cosmopolitanism," "custom," and "colony" would open up the texts, as well as the histories, the preconceptions, and even the terms used in their analysis. World literature would find a home most naturally in the gap between the tired units of analysis (European, literature) and their real-world effects (imperialism, exploitation), and the world would be revealed for the textuality at its foundation.

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