

LITERARY CRITICISM AND  
CULTURAL THEORY

*Edited by*  
William E. Cain  
Professor of English  
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# LITERARY CRITICISM AND CULTURAL THEORY

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THE COLONIZER ABROAD  
American Writers on Foreign Soil,  
1846–1912

Christopher Mark McBride



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This book is dedicated to my wife Kerianne  
and my sons Sawyer and Griffin.  
Without your loving presence, my life would lack the richness  
you so wonderfully give.



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# Introduction

Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation.

— Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?”

The history of America is very much a history of a nation connected to the sea. It was via the Atlantic that the continent was “discovered,” and it was across this same ocean that North America was settled by Europeans. Many of these settlers wrote revealing accounts of their travels in journals and notebooks. In March 1630, Englishman John Winthrop and a collection of his compatriots sailed from Southampton for America aboard the *Arbella*. Winthrop had been chosen Governor by the Massachusetts Bay Company, and he used this leadership role as a motivation for composing his famous “Model of Christian Charity” onboard the ship. Here, Winthrop delineates his vision for “a City upon a Hill” and warns his subjects: “Now the onely way to avoyde... shipwracke and to provide for our posterity is to followe the Counsell of Micah; to doe Justly, to love mercy, to walke humbly with our God.”<sup>1</sup> Fearful of a shipwreck on this perilous journey, Winthrop believes that adherence to religious principles will assure the safe arrival of his party. His concerns about the dangers of ocean travel were not unique among early American sea travelers, however. Reliant on successful ocean journeys to reach the New World, the Puritan mission was invariably tied to the sea. Donald Wharton explains: “For immigrants in the colonial period (and later times as well), the transatlantic crossing was both the trial by which one began a new life and a metaphor for the transition into a life of grace.”<sup>2</sup> However, after arriving at this new place, a settler’s life was full of difficulties. As Philip Fisher argues, foremost was the need for “a ‘clear land’ where a ‘new world’ might be built.”<sup>3</sup> Only when the continent was “clear” of natives, settlers believed, could “superior” Anglo-Saxons assert their political, religious, and economic control over the new territory. Hence, for European voyagers, the sea journey was just the beginning of a Western imperial mission that saw its culmination in the colonization of America.

This vision of America is what I define as the American colonial project. America itself was the product of colonization, but once the country began maturing into a full-fledged, independent nation, it looked to acquisition of the land desperately needed for expansion. Initially, this pushing outward took the form of pressing westward through an ever-moving frontier. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, this frontier was rapidly disappearing with the opening of the transcontinental railroad, establishment of telegraph service, and replacement of sailing vessels with steamships. Confronted with this troubling situation, America looked abroad, and it was toward the islands of the South Pacific, Cuba, and Hawaii that America turned its attention. Like North America itself, these lands were already occupied, so America was forced to continue its burgeoning imperial project via the often-celebrated water. "By the beginning of the nineteenth century," writes Nathaniel Philbrick, "the American enthusiasm for the sea had become a point of national pride."<sup>4</sup> Out of this delight in accomplishments ranging from the early English arrivals in America to the country's highly successful nineteenth-century whaling industry, the United States fashioned a new vision for its future. American history is tied immeasurably to the ocean, but as the land frontier closed the sea voyage became linked to expanding imperial and colonial motives.<sup>5</sup> For a definition of these key terms, I follow Edward Said, who writes: "'Imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism,' which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, David Spurr further clarifies these terms, using "the phrase 'colonial discourse' to designate a space within language that exists both as a series of historical instances and as a series of rhetorical functions."<sup>7</sup> Understanding the relationship between American colonial activity abroad and concurrent American culture at home is essential to an evaluation of much American literature, particularly the American writers under consideration in this project.

In this study of America's colonial development, I survey comparatively "minor" works by five major American authors of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Herman Melville's *Typee*, Richard Henry Dana's *To Cuba and Back*, Mark Twain's *Letters from the Sandwich Islands*, Charles Warren Stoddard's *South-Sea Idyls*, and Jack London's *The House of Pride*. The thread connecting these works is that each is produced by a white male American writer during or immediately after a visit to one of three non-American islands or island groups: the Marquesas Islands, the Hawaiian Islands, and Cuba. My project analyzes the product of colonial interactions among these writers, their literary characters, and the native inhabitants of these foreign islands in literary, historical, and cultural terms. The term "colonial" is critical to my study, because I view these writers not in the roles of the unbiased travelers and observers in which they often cast

themselves, but instead as active participants in the process of American colonization of foreign lands. Of course, none of these writers or their characters actively assumes the role of conqueror, but their attitudes, literary representations, and visual descriptions of the islands and their inhabitants belie an underlying racial ambivalence, xenophobia, and desire for American colonial control. These dispositions are best explained by the work of three prominent theorists central to my work: Abdul R. JanMohamed, Homi K. Bhabha, and Toni Morrison. Whereas Mohammed and Bhabha point to attitudes toward the “Other” as essential to colonial encounters, Morrison finds race to be a powerful, indelible component of American fiction. My discussion attempts to bridge the work of Mohammed, Bhabha, and other postcolonial theorists often undervalued by critics of American literature with Morrison’s incisive schema for confronting the role of race in our national literature and consciousness. The result is a study that offers alternative textual readings of these important American authors and provides a foundation for future deployment of postcolonial theory in the study of American literature. Moreover, it is my belief that by confronting and understanding the authorial and cultural strategies of these relatively “small” books, we can reevaluate some of the “big” books by these central American authors in a new light.

Chapter one focuses on Herman Melville’s first widely read publication, *Typee*. My argument is that Tommo’s journey to the Marquesan Islands begs on one level to be read as an American travel narrative fraught with images of wild lands and exotic islanders. A deeper reading, however, reveals that the text, published in 1846, occupies a troubling place in American literary and cultural history, because Tommo’s need to flee his “delightful captivity” on the islands problematizes race relations in antebellum America. While initially praised for their kindness, the Typees are ultimately cast as Other when their hospitality threatens Tommo with racial integration and Object, rather than Subject, status. Tommo’s whiteness and the underlying racism caused by colonial/racial stereotyping engenders his risky flight from the island and casts doubt on racial integration in nineteenth-century America. Such colonial stereotyping is likewise present on a distant island over a decade later. Chapter two examines Richard Henry Dana, Jr.’s 1859 narrative, *To Cuba and Back*, and explores the contradictions between his Free-Soil politics and American conceptions of race. For example, when Dana encounters poor hotel service, he reverts to prevalent American stereotypes of Cubans — an act typical of the colonizer. At his Havana hotel, Dana first berates the accommodations as inferior to those in “the South of Europe.” Later, he belittles a hotel employee, calling him a “swarthy Spanish lad” who looks “very much as if he never washed.” In each case, Dana has both chosen a reference point for the unfamiliar in something he knows — southern Europe — and asserted his perceived superiority on the basis of skin color. Dana’s behavior is surprisingly typical of the

authors I examine. Unable to neatly categorize a member of an Other group, the American colonizer can often revert only to stereotypes — frequently producing what Toni Morrison has called “a breakdown in the logic and machinery of plot construction” which exhibits “the powerful impact race has on narrative — and on narrative strategy.” This “impact” is what I seek to uncover.

Chapter three moves to the location that occupies the remainder of my study: the Hawaiian Islands. Examining Mark Twain’s *Letters from Hawaii*, I address the ways in which these newspaper letters written for the *Sacramento Union* in 1866 illustrate both Twain’s development as a literary persona and the ways in which postbellum American concerns are addressed through literary exploration abroad. Arguing for American population of the islands, Twain offers the country a way to work through its concerns about the efficacy of Reconstruction. Through Twain’s letters, America is able to tacitly endorse a revival of plantation culture on the islands as a means to commercial unification of the North and South. At the same time, Twain taps into this American interest in imperialism to build a national reputation for himself and begin charting his own literary future. Chapter four explores these islands and others of the South Pacific through the eyes of Charles Warren Stoddard. In his *South-Sea Idylls*, first published in 1873, Stoddard fictionally recounts eight months spent roaming the South Seas. Here, I argue that Stoddard’s text continued the deployment of the American vision of the Pacific put forth earlier by Melville. Stoddard’s approach to the native islanders differs, however, as his veiled autobiographical accounts reveal his homoerotic penchant for young native boys. Thus, for Stoddard, colonization becomes fetishism directed at these young islanders. Bhabha argues that such fetishism is key to any colonial activity, as it reinforces the difference of the Other and asserts the superiority of the Subject/Colonizer. Through his unique conception of the islands, Stoddard offers Americans an alternative vision of colonial capitalism tied directly to the bodies of those to be colonized.

My fifth and final chapter discusses Jack London’s short story collection, *The House of Pride*. In this series of six stories set on the Hawaiian Islands in the early twentieth century, London explores and articulates a distinctive view of the islands. Recognizing Hawaiians, such as the protagonist of “Koolau the Leper,” as heroic victims, London expresses a sympathetic view of the island natives. Here, an American chooses Hawaii as a temporary adopted home and ingratiates himself to the islanders, but the results of his writing are nonetheless colonial in nature. In his fiction I argue that we can find both the triumphs and contradictions of colonization and the troubling place of such conquests in America’s psyche. Attuned to both the horrors of leprosy and its confinement to native islanders, London’s stories articulate the way that leprosy is used metaphorically to suggest race, and the means by which the destruction of Hawaiian culture through colonization can be

used to further America's economic aims. Because it is ultimately assimilated through statehood, Hawaii becomes the apex of the American colonial project.

Herein lies the crux of my inquiry: Uncovering underlying American colonialist attitudes and their historical function by exploring our national literary texts. Looking closely at a diverse selection of writing, from the novel, to short fiction, to autobiography, to travel narrative, I have found significant evidence to implicate these writers as not only biased observers, but also as active participants in America's rise as a colonial power in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These literary works project two significant concepts: First, America breeds attitudes of white-based cultural superiority that fuel a "manifest destiny" attitude abroad; second, as a result, American literature of the period either actively pursues and reinforces colonial power, or, when critical of American expansion, such as in Melville's *Typee* or London's *The House of Pride*, subtly reinforces dominant colonial attitudes, thereby fostering the very prejudices that are denounced. American excursions at sea and subsequent interaction with island Other groups, then, are an essential part of the American historic and literary tradition and deserve expanded critical attention — a need I address with my project.

The island representations presented by these five authors, I will show, play an essential role in American attitudes abroad, while simultaneously reflecting dominant trends at home. Walter LaFeber argues: "The oversea empire that America controlled in 1900 was not a break in their history, but a natural culmination.... Americans neither acquired this empire during a temporary absence of mind nor had the empire forced upon them."<sup>8</sup> My work will, I hope, both deepen our understanding of the texts under study and further stimulate interest and critical inquiry into American travel writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and beyond, because the overwhelming presence of the sea and islands in the American imagination persists into the twenty-first century. For example, in 1997, Sebastian Junger's *The Perfect Storm*, a narrative of a fishing vessel lost in a fierce Atlantic storm was both a bestseller and a major film. In 2000, Nathaniel Philbrick's *In the Heart of the Sea*, a narrative of the sinking of the Nantucket whaleship *Essex* in 1820 after it was rammed by an eighty-five foot whale, was also a bestseller.<sup>9</sup> Further underscoring the American interest in Hawaii is the popularity of the film *Pearl Harbor*, which made over seventy million dollars on its opening weekend in 2001. Most revealing, however, was the decision to set the fourth installment of the CBS reality television series "Survivor" on the Marquesas Islands in 2002. The power of the sea and the conquest of islands, it seems, still persist in the American popular imagination.

Reflecting on his return to Bora Bora in 1777, Captain James Cook articulates the contradictions of colonialism:

I own, I cannot avoid expressing it as my real opinion, that it would have been far better for these poor people never to have known our superiority in the arts that make life comfortable, than, after once knowing it, to be again left and abandoned to their original incapacity for improvement. Indeed, they cannot be restored to that happy mediocrity in which they lived before we discovered them. It seems to me that it has become, in a manner, incumbent on the Europeans to visit them once in 3 or 4 years to supply them with those conveniences which we have introduced among them.<sup>10</sup>

Viewing Europeans as both “superior” and “discoverers”, Cook cannot escape the feeling, however condescending, of having initiated destruction of a thriving heterogeneous culture on the islands. However, Westerners did return to Bora Bora and elsewhere, and it is through their literature that the complex multifaceted ambiguity of the colonial project that took place on the islands of the world is revealed. Lawrence Buell has argued that “[t]he average article or monograph... projects a vision of nineteenth-century American literary history far more autolethic than that of the writers themselves except in their wildest cultural nationalist dreams.”<sup>11</sup> My aim is to avoid this untenable vision of literary history. Admittedly, I have chosen only a sampling of American island literature, and therefore I do not offer a comprehensive vision of America’s colonial writing. Instead, it is my hope that through an overview we can continue piecing together American writers’ fascinating connection to the sea, the islands, and our culture.

## NOTES

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2. Donald P. Wharton, “The Colonial Era,” in *America and the Sea: A Literary History*, ed. Haskell Springer (Athens, GA, and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 34.
3. Philip Fisher, *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.
4. Nathaniel Philbrick, foreword to *American Sea Writing: A Literary Anthology*, ed. Peter Neill (New York: Library of America, 2000), xiv.
5. Much outstanding work has been done on America’s relationship with the sea as expressed in our national literature. See, for example, Bert Bender, *Sea-Brothers: The Tradition of American Sea Fiction from Moby-Dick to the Present* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); Haskell Springer, ed., *America and the Sea: A Literary History* (Athens, GA, and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Thomas Philbrick, *James Fenimore Cooper and the Development of American Sea Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).
6. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 9.



7. David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 7.
8. Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), vii.
9. Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* (New York: Viking, 2000); Sebastian Junger, *The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea* (New York: Norton, 1997)
10. Captain James Cook, *Seventy North to Fifty South: The Story of Captain Cook's Last Voyage*, ed. Paul W. Dale (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 174.
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## Chapter One

# Melville's *Typee* and the Development of the American Colonial Imagination

Central to all encounters is a gaze—an initial look at a visible object. But in many colonial encounters, this gaze directed at an Other is often misinformed, leading the viewer to incorrect and slanted interpretations. For the European and American explorer, accounts of non-Western foreigners are often couched in the language and perception of the imagined “hegemony of the Eurocentric gaze.”<sup>1</sup> Such a biased report leads to American Captain David Porter’s description of a group sailing from “Madison’s Island” (Porter’s designation for the Marquesan island of Nukuheva) to meet his incoming ship in 1815.<sup>2</sup> Porter writes:

Shortly after anchoring, we discovered a boat coming from shore, with three white men in her, one of whom was completely naked, with the exception of a cloth about his loins; and his body was all over tattooed, I could not doubt his having been a long time on this, or some other island. I supposed them to be seamen, who had deserted from some vessels here, and under this impression would neither permit them to come alongside of the ship, nor allow any person to have any conversation with them; my mind was prejudiced against them. . . . I apprehended much trouble from them. . . and directed them to leave the ship.<sup>3</sup>

Gazing at these “white” men—the tattooed one in particular—Porter engages in behavior endemic to the partial Westerner encountering an unknown culture. Rather than listen to these men and learn their story, Porter can only react with his own self-described “prejudice,” casting the men as deserters, and assuming that the tattoos indicate a long residence and accompanying assimilation into a foreign civilization. Porter is so convinced of his opinion, that he implacably prohibits his crew from speaking with these possible deserters since “trouble” might arise. Men who are apparently without a commanding officer and who may have lived among

these “savage” Others do not qualify for even an explanatory voice in Porter’s Western scheme of foreign relations.

As is often the case, however, the initial interpretations that the prejudiced gaze produce are quickly collapsed by actual interaction with the object. Porter remarks later about the tattooed sailor, named Mr. Wilson:

He spoke their language with the same facility as his own, and had become in every respect, except in colour, an Indian. The looks of Wilson had strongly prejudiced me against him; but I soon discovered him to be an inoffensive, honest, good-hearted fellow, well disposed to render every service in his power. . . . He became indispensably necessary to us. . . and the ease with which he spoke their language removed all difficulties in our intercourse with them.<sup>4</sup>

Seeing his initial bias against Wilson overturned, Porter promptly acknowledges the use which Wilson has for him and his crew. As an interpreter on this island, Wilson helps Porter to establish his colonial and imperial aims—an invaluable service, for if Porter cannot communicate with these islanders, then his expedition and conquest will be much more difficult. Moreover, without the presence of the British interpreter, Porter would have to rely on a native Marquesan to relay his messages and commands, creating a troubling situation of dependence on a non-white Object. But even as a “white” man, Wilson’s status is unstable in this Western imperial system. Porter explains that, aside from color, Wilson is, in his opinion, “an Indian.” Clinging to Western ideas on racial and cultural segregation, Porter is unable to envision a man who is at home in both cultures. Instead, Wilson is now “one of them” and though useful, will occupy an exotic and subordinate position in Porter’s mind. While this case of cultural assimilation is useful for Porter’s mission—providing a “white” interpreter—crossing the lines of civilization is considered personally detrimental and renders Wilson forever an Other. In the Western colonial system, the most threatening scenario involves joining the foreign culture that one views as inferior—leading to a loss of one’s perceived position of privilege.

I begin with this illustrative anecdote from Porter’s journal because of the significant position the Marquesas hold in the history of American imperialism. In 1815, twenty-seven years before Herman Melville would visit these islands, Porter proposed to President James Madison that he be allowed to lead an American exploration voyage to the Pacific in order to explore potential commercial development and pursue military colonization.<sup>5</sup> After his arrival at Nukuheva, Porter notified President Madison and Secretary of State James Monroe that he had annexed the Marquesas in the name of the United States. Though neither acknowledged Porter’s letters, the event’s significance is reflected in John Carlos Rowe’s labeling of Porter’s act as “our first national venture into extraterritorial imperial-

ism.”<sup>6</sup> Bringing his colonial attitude to the Marquesas, Porter establishes these islands in the American imagination as a site for overseas expansion. He becomes involved in the island's power relations and participates in skirmishes between Marquesan tribes, thereby extending United States' military and political influence. Melville's later visit in 1842—which resulted in *Typee*—could only fuel expansionist visions in the American mind.<sup>7</sup> Wai-Chee Dimock has called “Melville's authorial enterprise... a miniature version of Manifest Destiny” which, for antebellum Americans, served as “a powerful account of national and individual destiny... [and] conferred on both the nation and the self a sense of corporeal autonomy in space and teleological ascendancy in time.”<sup>8</sup> Informed by growing visions of Manifest Destiny both in the West and abroad, antebellum Americans were hungry for writing which served this growing perception of emerging American supremacy. Melville's *Typee* was just such a text.

As a work central to the burgeoning American imperialism of the nineteenth century, *Typee* fuses nonfiction seafaring accounts that fed the American literary appetite with Melville's first excursion into fictive craft.<sup>9</sup> In doing so, Melville unites a number of distinctly American genres: the “voice from the fore-castle narrative” launched by Richard Henry Dana, Jr., the captivity narrative popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (of which Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* is a prime example), and the fugitive slave narrative popularized by Frederick Douglass' 1845 narrative.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, with the publication of *Typee*, Melville also simultaneously combines and blurs the worlds of fact and fiction. There is no doubt that Melville voyaged to the South Pacific aboard the whaler *Acushnet* in 1842, arrived at Nukuheva on June 23, 1842, and deserted the ship for the island with a shipmate. Melville also resided for some time with the *Typee* tribe, though it is not the four months the title suggests, but about one month.<sup>11</sup> We can assume, then, that while *Typee* has its roots in fact, “Melville made a good deal up as he wrote.”<sup>12</sup> The assertion that *Typee* is primarily a work of fiction is an important one, because the turn to a fiction of the Pacific—in contrast to the previous nonfiction works of Porter, Wilkes, and Dana—marks a change in the literary treatment of these islands. Consequently, this transformation suggests shifting American ideas on extracontinental Manifest Destiny. In the mid-nineteenth century, travel writing becomes more than simply journals and reports of foreign encounters. This new literature of colonization emerges as the developmental arena for testing the possibilities of American colonialism. Moreover, uniting nonfiction and fiction, captivity and escape, *Typee* mirrors American attitudes and actions during the 1840s and 1850s. In this period crucial to American imperial efforts abroad and the American institution of slavery at home, *Typee* reflects dominant sensibilities and raises difficult questions about America's future course. Analyzing American literature of the nineteenth century, Richard

Brodhead has argued that “schemes of literary production” are “bound up with a distinct social audience” and help “call together some particular social grouping, a portion of the whole potential public identified by its readerly interests but by other unifying social interests as well.”<sup>13</sup> For an American society eager to view foreign cultures and ready to imagine an expansion of American power, *Typee* fills a void not wholly addressed by previous nonfiction accounts of the Pacific.

Treated as a work of fiction rather than simply an extraordinary travel account, Melville’s *Typee* can be viewed as a significant American imperial text. His adventurous narrator Tommo travels to the Marquesas Islands much like any Western traveler visiting a foreign place virtually untouched by Western civilization.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, Tommo and his captain recall Cook, Porter, and their crews before them. The uniqueness of *Typee* lies, however, in Tommo’s own conception of his status among the islanders. Unlike Porter, who becomes involved in disputes between island tribes,<sup>15</sup> or the French, who are ready to occupy Nukuheva in the late pages of the text, Tommo does not initially harbor any direct desire to appropriate his own “white” power among the natives. Instead, he attempts to function in an unstable cultural limbo: a “white” Subject living freely among “dark” Others.<sup>16</sup> This indeterminate status is fully manifest in Tommo’s description of his experiences on the island. Relaying his adventure, Tommo commonly portrays the islanders through stereotypes, which Homi K. Bhabha calls the “major discursive strategy” of colonial discourse.<sup>17</sup> But these essentially degradative stereotypes often give way to praise for the natives, displaying Tommo’s own ambivalence and uncertainty towards both the Typees and his own colonizing Western culture—two disparate but colliding worlds.<sup>18</sup> Here, my interest lies in examining the application and breakdown of many of Tommo’s colonial stereotypes as a function of his own status as Other among the Typees.<sup>19</sup> While Tommo apparently envisions himself in an aloof position as Subject in the text, his actual status is much more uncertain, casting him in the position of colonized, and forcing a narrative resolution of the plot’s trend toward Tommo’s impending cultural assimilation by the islanders. The adventure narrative and the inconsistent plot resolution reflect both incipient attitudes of United States’ manifest destiny and foreign domination, and directly illustrate the attitudes and prejudices of Melville’s cultural milieu: antebellum America. Only by reading *Typee* as a vibrant cultural product of this tumultuous historical period can we fully interpret its action and resonating literary impact.

Since *Typee* functions as a colonial text, its initial thrust lies in the “social articulation of [cultural] difference”<sup>20</sup> which Tommo attempts to establish through stereotyping of the Marquesan natives.<sup>21</sup> His first description of the Typees notes “the savage countenances... gleaming with wild curiosity and wonder,... the naked forms and tattooed limbs of brawny warriors... [and] the slighter figures of

young girls.”<sup>22</sup> Here, the “tattooed limbs and slighter figures” of the natives hold Tommo’s attention and indicate the beginning of his process of colonial differentiation. Like Porter viewing approaching islanders thirty years earlier, Tommo’s gaze notices the “savage countenances” full of “wild curiosity” that represent common Western stereotypes of South Pacific islanders. But these stereotypes do not prove true in actual intercourse with the natives. The next morning, Tommo states that “as yet we had been treated with no violence; nay, had even been kindly and hospitably entertained”<sup>23</sup> which indicates the hospitable treatment extended by the Typees to their guests Tommo and Toby, his partner in escape from the *Dolly*. But in the following sentence, Tommo wonders: “But what dependence could be placed upon the fickle passions which sway the bosom of a savage? His inconstancy and treachery are proverbial. Might it not be that beneath these fair appearances the islanders covered some perfidious design, and that their friendly reception of us might only precede some horrible catastrophe?”<sup>24</sup> Echoing Porter, who avoids the tattooed figures rushing to greet him, Tommo, too, is faced with a very cordial welcome by the islanders—a welcome which seems to project nothing but curiosity and goodwill. Yet he proceeds to conjecture about what he perceives as an impending “catastrophe” perpetuated by these “inconstant and treacherous” islanders.

In this early part of the text, Tommo deploys existing Western stereotypical images of these native islanders to form his opinion and undergird his narrative representations.<sup>25</sup> Eric Cheyfitz argues that Western imperialism “necessitates the construction of others as an absolutely oppositional, completely homogeneous, and ultimately superfluous figure, rather than as figures in a possible dialogue of equals.”<sup>26</sup> Throughout his narrative, Tommo continuously engages in this quintessential imperialist activity. His frequent sense of fear on the island is not occasioned by the native’s behavior, but rather by his own preconceived doubts about these apparent “savages.” Even before actual intercourse with the islanders, Tommo expresses biased expectations for his South Pacific journey. He writes: “The Marquesas! What strange visions of outlandish things does the very name spirit up! Naked houris—cannibal banquets... savage woodlands guarded by horrible idols—*heathenish rites and human sacrifices.*”<sup>27</sup> These prejudices and stereotypes further inform Tommo’s reactions while on the island. At one point, awakened by the everyday occurrence of an early morning fire, Tommo is “apprehensive of some evil” and “reflected that we were indeed at the mercy of a tribe of cannibals.”<sup>28</sup> To this point, however, only Tommo’s prejudices inform his convictions. There has been nothing to justify his attitude except his own Western notions about the Typees and their reputation for cannibalistic, “savage behavior.”

Though continued cultural contact with the islanders might be expected to temper Tommo’s bias, his affinity for negative stereotypes extends beyond early

portions of the text. As his story unfolds, Tommo's Western expectations continually resurface, often contradicting direct evidence which refutes his prejudices. Tommo's treatment by Marheyo and his family illustrates this glaring inconsistency. At one point, Tommo muses: "[a]ll the inhabitants of the valley treated me with great kindness; but as to the household of Marheyo, with whom I was now permanently domiciled, nothing could surpass their efforts to minister to my comfort."<sup>29</sup> This accommodating behavior does not soothe Tommo, however, as his colonial mind fails to heed Marheyo's kindness fully. Instead, Tommo reverts to predetermined images of the natives. He comments shortly hereafter that he is troubled by the knowledge that "these very men, kind and respectful as they were to me, were, after all, nothing better than a set of cannibals."<sup>30</sup> Apparently, the idea of cannibalism—mere speculation and rumor at this point—is enough to outweigh the actual behavior of the Typees towards Tommo, allowing him to dismiss their amiability. Castigating this entire group as "cannibals" is an act of colonial appropriation which exempts Tommo from considering that these "savages" may, in fact, be capable of what he deems civilized behavior. As John Samson notes, Tommo "persists in using his own terminology for their actions, persists in applying the ideas he has read in the narratives of the missionaries and sailors."<sup>31</sup> Installed in a situation which is not simply binary, "white" and good/"dark" and bad, Tommo assigns the Typees labels with which he is familiar. Any deviation from these standard terms would represent a movement out of Western binary discourse into a sphere of equality which allows the Typees a dialectical identity—posing a challenge to Western thought on "civilization" and "savages." Tommo is not ready for, or capable of, such a change in attitude. Moreover, besides skirting the challenge to his own Western binary discourse, Tommo's adherence to condemnation also serves to maintain his status as Subject among these Others, which is a common rhetorical activity in colonial discourse.<sup>32</sup> Through the language of stereotyping, Tommo can defer any thought that he may be similar to these "savages," and thereby maintain what he sees as his own cultural superiority.

While Tommo's stereotyping persists throughout *Typee*, it does become less frequent—his attitude perhaps tempered by realization that his situation is an abnormal one. Of course, Tommo does continue to engage in the act of colonizer applying his language and ideas to the colonized, making statements such as: "[t]he minds of these simple savages, unoccupied by matters of graver moment, were capable of deriving the utmost delight from circumstances which would have passed unnoticed in more intelligent communities"; as he describes the Typee's "delight" with the "childish amusement" of popguns.<sup>33</sup> Treating the Typees as puerile, Tommo fails to see his own critique of Western colonial weaponry here. Tommo's culture assigns a juvenile label to such a symbolic weapon as a popgun, while at the same time it employs actual guns to subjugate foreign cultures. However, the



emergence of Tommo's own status as colonized—which he doesn't immediately recognize—begins to turn his thoughts away from derogative interpretation of Typee living. He begins to think positively of his condition, and remarks: "I was well disposed to think I was in the 'Happy Valley,' and that beyond those heights there was nought a world of care and anxiety."<sup>34</sup> Further yielding into praise for the Typees, Tommo writes that "[c]ivilization, for every advantage she imparts, holds a hundred evils in reserve" which are "unknown among these unsophisticated people."<sup>35</sup> Time spent with these islanders and observation of their plain life has led Tommo both to admiration for their simplicity as well as disdain for his own Western world.<sup>36</sup> He even answers the possible objection both within himself and his reading audience that "these shocking unprincipled wretches are cannibals" by rationalizing: "[b]ut they are such only when they seek to gratify the passion of revenge upon their enemies."<sup>37</sup> It seems, then, that Tommo is not troubled by cannibalism towards other "savages," which reveals his belief in the subordinate status of all Other groups. Continuing his sanctioning of Typee culture Tommo proceeds to compare cannibalism to recent executions in England and reasons that "[t]he term 'savage' is... often misapplied."<sup>38</sup> The man who previously condemned these "dark savages" is now reconsidering his position, and is beginning to defend their behavior, including cannibalism, in defiance of his earlier preconceptions.

Part of Tommo's softening stance towards the Typees can be attributed to his colonial fetishization of these racial Others. Like many sailors, his first attraction is to the uninhibited young Marquesan females. While still aboard the *Dolly*, he sees the "swimming nymphs... [with] their jet-black tresses streaming over their shoulders, and half enveloping their otherwise naked forms."<sup>39</sup> Tommo admires their "savage vivacity" and wonders: "How avoid so dire a temptation?"<sup>40</sup> While Tommo's description here is laden with sexual energy directed at these "exotic" women, his fetishization serves alternate, colonial functions, too. Toni Morrison writes of fetishization: "[It] is especially useful in evoking erotic fears or desires and establishing fixed and major difference where difference does not exist or is minimal... [and] is a strategy often used to assert the categorical absolutism of civilization and savagery."<sup>41</sup> Clearly, Tommo engages in such fetishization of the female islanders here, as he notes their "savage vivacity... wild grace, [and] abandoned voluptuousness."<sup>42</sup> But his cultural vacillation is never far away. Tommo's admiration of these "primitive" elements of the women is tempered by his own puritan ideas on propriety, as he laments: "[o]ur ship was now wholly given up to every species of riot and debauchery... [and] [t]he grossest licentiousness and the most shameful inebriety."<sup>43</sup> Here, Tommo reveals what Bhabha calls the essential ambivalence which is central to the colonial stereotype.<sup>44</sup> By establishing the attractiveness of the female's unbridled sexuality, but ultimately assigning it a

pejorative place in his Western culture, Tommo expresses his own ambivalence towards these islanders: he is both physically attracted and morally repulsed. Dramatizing the tempting but improper sexuality of the women is part of “the process of subjectification”<sup>45</sup> of these natives, which maintains Tommo’s privileged outsider status. This is fetishization functioning, as Morrison puts it, to differentiate “civilization and savagery.”<sup>46</sup> Tommo’s Subject status is later called into question by his participation in Typee culture, but at this point he works assiduously to uphold the idea of the Typees as Other. Therefore, echoing many colonialist writers, Tommo employs fetishization and stereotypes as a means of establishing difference<sup>47</sup> throughout most of the text. As time passes, however, Tommo becomes unable to maintain this play of difference between himself and the islanders, and his separation from the Typees begins to disintegrate.

Essential to this developing dissolution of the cultural barrier between Tommo and the Typees is the breakdown of his ingrained notions on color differentiation. Early in the narrative, Tommo equates a coconut with “the brown shaven skull of one of the savages,”<sup>48</sup> which expresses his conscious recognition and predictable labeling of the islander’s skin color—associating “brown” with “savage.” Later, after he and Toby first meet the Typees, Tommo comments: “They scanned the whiteness of our limbs, and seemed utterly unable to account for the contrast they presented to the swarthy hue of our faces, embrowned from a six months’ exposure to the scorching sun of the Line.”<sup>49</sup> In their initial encounter, the whiteness of Tommo’s body distinguishes him from the natives, and he appears satisfied that such difference exists since it casts the Typees as racial Others. In fact, Tommo exhibits almost an explorer’s pride when he announces: “I have no doubt that we were the first white men who ever penetrated thus far back into their territories.”<sup>50</sup> This differentiating “whiteness,” set against the “darkness” of the Other, is important to the colonizer’s sense of distinction from the colonized. Moreover, it is telling that Tommo seems to gloss over the significance of his own “embrowned” face. In the Western binary system, “whiteness” is the positive side of a dichotomy where “black” is the antithesis, and Tommo is certainly pleased by what he perceives as the ascendancy of his skin color. As a new arrival on the island, Tommo brings with him the prejudices of his culture, and his narrative shows these biases in action.

But a colonizer is not satisfied with merely upholding the hierarchies of his culture; he must project these schemes onto others. For Tommo, this projection of authority is tied primarily to skin color. At one point, carrying his notions of “white” deeper into the narrative, Tommo attempts to impose Western ideas of “whiteness” on Typee culture—where the traditional “white”/“black” order does not exist. Visiting a sacred burial place, Tommo claims that: “[t]he sign of the inscrutable taboo was seen in the shape of a mystic roll of *white tappa*” [my empha-

sis).<sup>51</sup> His note to this passage states that “[w]hite appears to be the sacred color of the Marquesans.”<sup>52</sup> While white is certainly a privileged color in Western culture—particularly regarding skin—Tommo’s subsequent description of the “dead chief’s effigy” belies such a white sacredness in Typee culture. The honored chief appears in a canoe of “rich, dark-colored wood” and the body of the figure is “effectually concealed in a heavy robe of brown tappa.”<sup>53</sup> If white is the sacred color of the Marquesans, then one would expect the statue of the chief to be garbed in white, with the figure perhaps riding in a light-colored canoe. This, however, is not the case, and appears only to be Tommo’s championing of “whiteness” in the face of his anomalous status among these “dark” islanders. Tommo’s interpretation may again be an attempt to appropriate himself special status by equating his “whiteness” with Typee sacredness. Moreover, there may be an underlying doubt emerging because Tommo’s “whiteness” did not previously need to be defended or privileged against Typee “darkness”—the hierarchy was assumed. Having to read and write “whiteness” onto Typee culture may reflect Tommo’s growing subconscious realization that his status as “white” indeed casts him as subordinate and Other in this racially foreign society.

Tommo’s color stereotypes are again disrupted as he engages in an extended description of the Typees’ physical appearance. Early in his stay, Tommo explains: “I was especially struck by the physical strength and beauty which they displayed... and by the singular contrasts they presented among themselves in their various shades of complexion... In beauty of form they surpassed anything I had ever seen.”<sup>54</sup> Gazing at his hosts, Tommo fully participates in fetishization of these others, admiring their unique complexions and differentiating them from “the fine gentlemen and dandies” of his own culture.<sup>55</sup> While ostensibly praising the Typee’s “different shades of complexion,” though, his natural attraction is to the lighter shades of skin color. As a result, Tommo directs his true appreciation to the “young females whose skins were almost as white as any Saxon damsel’s [where] a slight dash of mantling brown [was] all that marked the difference.”<sup>56</sup> This appearance, he explains, is the product of “an artificial process and an entire exclusion from the sun.”<sup>57</sup> Applying papa root causes the skin to become pale, and Tommo’s admiration rests with these “young girls who resort to this method of heightening their charms.”<sup>58</sup> What Tommo does not grasp, however, is that while Typee skin lightening does erase the skin color differentiation between the natives and himself, making the women more appealing to him, such alteration, coupled with Tommo’s sunburned skin, also aligns him with the Typees in appearance. This blurring renders “whiteness” not as a purely Euro-American phenomenon, but as a quality also visible in the people he deems “savages”—thereby calling intentional cultural construction of “race” and “color” into question.<sup>59</sup> If these women’s skin can become “white” by applying roots and Tommo’s skin can turn “dark”

by exposure to the sun, then skin color is an inaccurate measure of racial difference, and Tommo cannot claim privileged status simply on the grounds of color. Regardless of Tommo's interpretation, this incident again reveals that the "play of difference" supporting Tommo's status as Subject in the Typee valley is gradually giving way to his absorption into homogeneous Typee (Object/Other) culture.

Besides passive integration into this foreign community through the natural erosion of constructed difference, Tommo himself participates in his assimilation into Typee culture by embracing many of their cultural norms. One area where this adoption takes place is language. Upon his initial arrival in the Typee valley, Tommo claims no knowledge of the Typee language whatsoever. He asserts: "from our [his and Toby's] ignorance of the language it was impossible for us to enlighten [the Typees]."<sup>60</sup> As his stay in the valley progresses, however, this linguistic differentiation gives way to an apparent gradual understanding of the native language. Tommo is able to translate "'Ki-ki muee muee, ah! moee moee mortarkee'" into "eat plenty, ah! sleep very good,"<sup>61</sup> and later understands that "abo" means "wait."<sup>62</sup> Tommo's increasing knowledge of the Typee language seems to promise more facilitated communications with the natives and an improved residence in the valley. Yet Tommo will often feign ignorance of the Typee dialect in his narrative. For example, when Mehevi attempts to explain the taboo on females in canoes, Tommo exclaims: "I could not comprehend a word he uttered."<sup>63</sup> A few days later, Tommo listens to Marnoo addressing the natives and laments: "[l]ittle as I understood of the language";<sup>64</sup> before he proceeds to give a full-page description of Marnoo's "powerful... exhibition of natural eloquence."<sup>65</sup> Granted, Tommo does note that he is able to combine his limited knowledge of the Typee language with observation of Marnoo's "animated gestures... and varying expression"<sup>66</sup> to arrive at his translation. Nonetheless, Tommo has shown that, contrary to what he often maintains, he is capable of understanding the Typee language.<sup>67</sup> Myra Jehlen notes that in many colonial and captivity narratives, the Western writer attempts to disavow any knowledge of the Other's language, since doing so would bring them into the writer's community as people "with whom he can communicate" and bridge the gap of difference important for the Subject/Object relationship.<sup>68</sup> Tommo engages in this practice, too, and for the same imperialist reasons. Acknowledging his grasp of the Typee language would bring him one step closer to membership in their culture, so he resists displaying such comprehension whenever possible—attempting to uphold the Typees' "linguistic difference,"<sup>69</sup> and, in his mind, preserve his outsider status. Tommo has already seen, but failed to comprehend fully, a bridging of the difference between "white" and "dark" skin. Therefore, conceding that he, a Westerner, is a member of the Typee's linguistic community would further dissolve the separation between himself and their culture.

While Tommo's assumptions about skin color and language are called into question by his narrative, many of his actions during his stay in the Typee valley also suggest the collapse of perceived difference and expose his assimilation into their culture. Tommo's adaptation of native clothing is one prominent example. In the name of preserving his own clothes "should [he] again appear among civilized beings," Tommo is "obliged to assume the Typee costume," which is basically a toga.<sup>70</sup> As he prepares for the festival at the Ti, Tommo notes: "knowing that I could not delight the savages more than by conforming to their style of dress, I removed from my person the large robe of tappa which I was accustomed to wear over my shoulders whenever I sallied into the open air, and remained merely girt about with a short tunic descending from my waist to my knees."<sup>71</sup> Dress is an important part of any civilization, and here, Tommo adopts the clothes of a culture from which he claims independence. Such behavior merely enmeshes him more deeply in Typee society, though—a concern which Tommo must conceal by attributing his behavior to a gracious wish to "delight the savages."

This change of clothes is not Tommo's only assumption of Typee behavior, however. Later, he remarks:

When at Rome, do as the Romans do, I held to be so good a proverb, that being in Typee I made a point of doing as the Typees did. Thus I ate poee-poe as they did; I walked about in a garb striking for its simplicity; and I reposed on a community of couches; besides doing many other things in conformity with their peculiar habits; but the farthest I ever went in the way of conformity, was on several occasions to regale myself with raw fish.<sup>72</sup>

While Tommo suggests that his behavior is simply polite conformity, he fails to comprehend that he is, in fact, joining the Typee culture. Each of his activities reflects intimacy with his hosts and understanding of their norms. He is even privy to the exclusive "afternoon repast with the bachelor chiefs of the Ti," about which he comments: "The Ti was a right jovial place. It did my heart, as well as my body, good to visit it. Secure from female intrusion, there was no restraint upon the hilarity of the warriors, who, like the gentlemen of Europe after the cloth is drawn and the ladies retire, freely indulged their mirth."<sup>73</sup> Dana Nelson notes that those who are colonizing often use the language of Western culture to justify their actions,<sup>74</sup> and Tommo's case is one such variation/deployment. He invokes the language of the Western tradition by remarking "when in Rome do as the Romans" and claiming that he is like "like the gentlemen of Europe" to allay his own fears about assimilation into Typee society—a group which both fascinates him with its simplicity and camaraderie at the Ti, and appalls him with its cannibalistic and "savage" reputation. The misplaced Tommo is welcomed into the male bastion of the Ti, but he does not view this experience as anything other than a re-enactment

of the actions of European gentlemen. Rather than recognize or accept that he is facing indoctrination into a foreign culture, Tommo instead casts himself as a polite Westerner merely biding time as a distinguished guest of these Others. Tommo is at least somewhat unsure of his own cultural place, however, because he attempts to justify his status in the Typee (“savage”) society through allusions to Roman (ancient Western) and contemporary European society. Moreover, Tommo neglects to acknowledge his previous position as an American and a sailor, instead defining himself through European cultures—for many Americans, still the touchstones of civilization in the 1840s. These rhetorical moves reveal his developing concerns. Clearly, the colonizer/colonized Tommo is a man without a culture who is being steadily drawn into the only one available to him: Typee.

Bringing an end to what Tommo calls his “delightful captivity,” but what is actually personal cultural indeterminacy, becomes necessary as the threat of a new Typee signifier looms: the tattoo. The art of tattooing is obviously a significant part of Typee society, as Tommo notices that all inhabitants of the valley have some form of tattoo. Even fair-skinned Fayaway is not “altogether free from the hideous blemish of tattooing.”<sup>75</sup> True to his Euro-American sensibilities, Tommo wants no part of this “savage,” “barbarous art”<sup>76</sup> and when approached about being tattooed, he is “[h]orrified at the bare thought of being rendered hideous for life.”<sup>77</sup> Michael C. Berthold argues that “Tommo regards the tattoo strictly as an emblem of captivity,”<sup>78</sup> but Tommo’s fear is clearly more deeply seated. While he is apprehensive about marking himself with a tattoo, Tommo does acquiesce to “have both arms tattooed from just above the wrist to the shoulder.”<sup>79</sup> The Typees, however, want to begin with Tommo’s “face divine,”<sup>80</sup> to which he objects. As the natives persist in their insistence that Tommo be tattooed, Tommo realizes: “The whole system of tattooing was, I found, connected with their religion; and it was evident, therefore, that they were resolved to make a convert of me.”<sup>81</sup> This is Tommo’s first conscious realization of what may be in store for him: cultural assimilation. Earlier, he wrote: “In vain I racked my invention to find out some motive for the strange desire these people manifested to retain me among them; but I could discover none.”<sup>82</sup> Now, he has made the discovery. The Typees want Tommo to become one of them and a tattoo is part of the “conversion.”

Bhabha calls skin “the most visible of fetishes,”<sup>83</sup> and concern over skin is ultimately what frightens Tommo and his Yankee sensibilities. Approached by the resident tattoo artist, Tommo says: “[t]he idea of engrafting his tattooing upon my white skin filled him with all a painter’s enthusiasm.”<sup>84</sup> Terrified at the possibility of equating his “white” skin with that of the natives—at this point, one of the few remaining traits which distinguishes him from the Typees—Tommo flees “half wild with terror and indignation.”<sup>85</sup> With his skin branded like the Typees, Tommo will become the colonized Other, assimilated through skin into a culture he has

been taught to regard as "savage." If we recall Porter's aversion to Wilson's elaborately tattooed body, we can see the anxiety that such marking raises in the Westerner. "White" and "dark" will become fused through the tattoo, collapsing the difference which Tommo has attempted to preserve.<sup>86</sup> Unable to accept this possibility, Tommo decides he must cultivate a plan for escape from the Typee valley.

At this point the text is at an impasse. Tommo's rationale for fleeing the Typees is his repugnance at having his skin tattooed like these Others. Yet, mere drawing on the skin is not the only concern here. There is an underlying racism based upon fear of looking permanently like these "dark" Others, and a fear of absorption into a foreign culture—particularly one labeled as "savage" and "cannibalistic" by Tommo's own Western society. His racial stereotypes, however, have broken down, revealing the Typees to be as civilized, in many cultural respects, as any Westerners, thereby leaving Tommo with lingering cultural ambivalence. Bhabha explains that "the visibility of the racial/colonial Other is at once a point of identity... and at the same time a problem for the attempted closure within the discourse."<sup>87</sup> The narrative of *Typee* must now work towards a closure which the "visibility" of the Typees has problematized, and the text needs a means of resolution. The most convenient available way around this lack of closure is deployment of cannibalism, which certainly would have shocked nineteenth-century readers. In fact, one early review of the book called *Typee* "An apotheosis of barbarism! A panegyric on cannibal delights!"<sup>88</sup> By highlighting "savage" cannibalism, *Typee* can divert attention from the other potentially volatile issues raised in the text.<sup>89</sup> Morrison writes that "a breakdown in the logic and machinery of plot construction implies the powerful impact race has on narrative—and on narrative strategy."<sup>90</sup> *Typee* is a glaring case in point. Tommo explains his urgent need to leave the valley by citing his glimpse into a taboo vessel where he sees "the disordered members of a human skeleton, the bones still fresh with moisture, and with particles of flesh clinging to them here and there!"<sup>91</sup> Tommo claims that he fears for his life and the natives' "treacherous scheme,"<sup>92</sup> which he suggests is his impending consumption. To this point, however, everything in the text has suggested that Tommo is safe from Typee harm, and that, at worst, they only eat their slain enemies — a practice which Tommo has already endorsed. Moreover, Tommo himself is considered "taboo," which affords him almost unlimited protection. Tommo's fear of being eaten, then, seems unfounded,<sup>93</sup> and appears merely to function as a justification for his escape and subsequent attack on Mow-Mow with a boat hook. Cannibalism is never a threat to Tommo. Rather, it serves as a deterrent to potential colonizing white men entering the valley. Hence, if Tommo leaves the valley with stories of Typee hospitality, the natives will lose the protection their reputation affords them. Tommo never acknowledges or realizes this protective function, and instead, *Typee* hurries to a conclusion which belies the facts of the text.

What I am suggesting here is that *Typee* ultimately relies upon the predictable trope of cannibalism to avoid engaging the more serious racial issues raised in the text. Cannibalism would have been regarded by any of Melville's Christian/Western readers as deplorable,<sup>94</sup> thereby justifying Tommo's actions during his escape and allowing Western readers to categorize the Marquesans as "savages"—avoiding any thought of both their condition as "racially" Other and their status as victims of imperialism. Such classification also defers any discussion of these islanders as racially equal to "white" Westerners, eschewing the consideration of "race" in this racially volatile period for a tale of exotic foreigners and escape.<sup>95</sup> *Typee* is more complex than its facile denouement, however. The text has raised many questions about the nature of stereotyping, both racial and colonial, none of which are ever fully confronted in Tommo's narrative.<sup>96</sup>

Ultimately, *Typee* attempts to function as a simple adventure narrative in the form of a novel, peppered with a few modest condemnations of Western culture. Tommo's story of his flight from the Dolly and subsequent residence and escape from the Typees is certainly full of action, the type which made it a "bestseller,"<sup>97</sup> and Melville does give some thought to abuses carried out by missionaries in the name of civilizing cultures such as the Marquesans. These critiques, which argue that "the missionaries may seek to disguise the matter [of civilizing] as they will, but the facts are incontrovertible,"<sup>98</sup> are certainly pointed, but do not address anything more than cursory issues. Tommo's refusal to have his skin marked to look like these "racial" Others manifests an element of racism and xenophobia which is never addressed in *Typee*. The novel does raise doubts about the Western position towards these native islanders, but the silent voice of the residents of Typee valley, relegated to the status of Other, calls out for a further analysis of their situation in terms of "race" and colonization which are never overtly confronted in the text — a topic Jack London addresses some sixty years later. If Tommo cannot function within this "racially" Other society, what are the possibilities for "black"/"white" relations in mid-nineteenth-century America?—a particularly important question for a novel published in 1846 when racial tension loomed in America. John Carlos Rowe has argued that in *Typee*, "Melville offers a critique... specifically relevant to his white United States' readers in the 1840s and 1850s" and claims that "Melville put his primarily white readers in the position of the victim in an attempt to transform their affections, as well as their intellectual attitudes with respect to domestic slavery, Euroamerican colonialism in Polynesia, and different cultures in general."<sup>99</sup> Rowe's analysis is insightful and provides a potentially useful cultural function for the text, but it is difficult to ascribe volition for the critiques to Melville, who was primarily concerned with offering the reading public an adventure narrative that satisfied their curiosity about exotic foreign cultures. Had the text provided a more even picture of cultural harmony, then it might



have offered an alternative vision of antebellum America where white readers could see the pain inflicted upon Others in the name of "progress." As it stands, however, *Typee* offers no such vision.

Edward Said has written about Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, itself a seminal colonial text:

Conrad's readers of the time were not expected to ask about or concern themselves with what became of the natives. What mattered to them was how Marlow makes sense of everything, for without his deliberately fashioned narrative there is no history worth telling, no fiction worth entertaining, no authority worth consulting.<sup>100</sup>

Such a scenario may explain the position of *Typee* and its failure to address race relations, as Tommo uses the tattoo and cannibalism to "make sense of everything" for himself and American readers. Ultimately ambivalent towards the "race" issues Melville may have wanted to raise, or, perhaps, unable to posit any plausible solution, *Typee* stops short of probing racial and cultural consideration as "white" Tommo eschews any extended life among a group of "racial" Others. The textual impact on American readers is twofold. First, the Marquesas and other South Seas Islands take up a place in the American colonial imagination as "savage" locations requiring Western civilizing influence. Second, racial difference and integration are portrayed as unacceptable, and Tommo returns to his own highly segregated American society. These attitudes, we will see, grow stronger in the American mind as the nineteenth century progresses and the ongoing United States literary project forges stronger links to the American imperial imagination.

## NOTES

1. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 322. This work offers a well-informed discussion of the tropes inherent to colonial representation both in literature and film. See also Michael Argyle and Mark Cook, *Gaze and Mutual Gaze* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Here, the authors examine the psychological and social aspects of the gaze along with accompanying expressions of control, hostility, aggression, and submission.
2. By naming the island after President James Madison, Porter calls attention to the national and administrative power of the United States government that rested behind his mission. For a discussion of naming as a colonial activity, see Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). The islands were originally named Las Marquesas de Mendoza in 1595 by the Spanish explorer Mendaña to honor his friend the Viceroy of Peru. In renaming the island, Porter continues a pattern of Western imperialism.

3. Captain David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean* (New York: Wiley and Halsted, 1822; reprint, Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1986), 303-4 (page references are to reprint edition).
4. Porter, 304.
5. John Carlos Rowe, "Melville's *Typee*: U.S. Imperialism at Home and Abroad," in *Nationalist Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives*, ed. Donald Pease (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 265.
6. Rowe, 261. See also T. Walter Herbert, Jr., *Marquesan Encounters: Melville and the Meaning of Civilization* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Herbert also views the Marquesas Islands as the first United States colony, and notes that "Porter has often been called the first American imperialist" (79).
7. Though Tommo claims not to have any familiarity with Porter (18), Rowe argues that Melville seems to have had some knowledge of Porter's proposal when he wrote *Typee*. See also Charles Roberts Anderson, *Melville in the South Seas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), who has also claimed that Melville was familiar with both Porter's visit and his journal.
8. See Wai-Chee Dimock, *Empire for Liberty: Melville and the Poetics of Individualism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 10-11. Dimock argues that the terms "empire" and "liberty" are not incompatible, but instead are conjoined in American history—and Melville's writing—where freedom and dominion give America "its sovereign place in history." Melville's work, then, reflects his own "authorial sovereignty" over nineteenth-century American letters. Dimock also argues that Jacksonian America was "an America newly confronted with class difference" through immigration (12) and claims that "space offered the best solution to class conflict" (16). Herein lies one motive for American imperialism.
9. Among the most popular of these sea narratives were Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (New York: Harper, 1840); Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842*, 5 Vols. (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845); and Porter's *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean*.
10. Many excellent studies have been done on Melville's appropriation of these three genres. See, for example, Rowe (270-2) who finds the rhetoric of captivity narratives and the action of a fugitive slave narrative in *Typee*; Walter E. Bezanson, "Herman Melville: Uncommon Common Sailor," in *Melville's Evermoving Dawn: Centennial Essays*, ed. John Bryant and Robert Milder (Kent, Ohio: Kent University Press, 1997), 31-57. Bezanson argues that Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* was a model that Melville admired, but also sees debts to Cooper's sea fiction in *Typee*.
11. For an insightful discussion of Melville's experiences aboard the *Acushnet* and at Nukuheva which draws on both established and more recent information, see Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, Vol. I (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 204-18. See also Anderson for an earlier but thorough discussion of the same period.
12. John Bryant, "Manuscript, Edition, Revision: Reading *Typee* with Trifocals," in Bryant and Milder, 297-306. Along similar lines, Haskell Springer and Douglas Robillard explain that "scholarship has shown that much of the supposed 'truth' [of *Typee*] actually comes from imagination and from various printed sources."

- "Herman Melville," in *America and the Sea: A Literary History*, ed. Haskell Springer (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 128.
13. Richard H. Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 6.
  14. While the Marquesas were visited by a number of Westerners, the island culture was still homogeneous at the time of Melville's visit. See Neil Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Rennie estimates that between Cook's "rediscovery" of the islands in 1774 and the French appropriation of the islands in 1842, at least 150 Europeans and Americans had visited the Marquesas (193).
  15. See Porter (300-406) for a description of his battles with various native tribes on Nukuheva.
  16. See Dana Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature, 1638-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Following Nelson's lead, I will sometimes place terms such as "black," "white," and "race" in quotation marks to indicate their "arbitrary constructedness" as literary, cultural, and social metaphors.
  17. Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism," chap. in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 66.
  18. See Lawrence Buell, "American Literary Emergence as Postcolonial Phenomenon," *American Literary History* 4 (Fall 1992): 411-442. Buell finds "many marks of postcolonialism in American Renaissance writing" (427) as American writers broke free of Britain's colonial presence. Using this reasoning, it is clear that Tommo is both a Postcolonial figure emerging from the shadow of America's past as colony and a colonizer asserting his country's newfound imperial status.
  19. My approach to *Typee* is grounded in the postcolonial, cultural, and racial theory of the following: Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993); Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1992). Said sees explorers and novelists using stories "to assert their own identity" while Bhabha discusses the position of the "Other" in colonial representations. I have bridged the theoretical work of Said and Bhabha with claims about race as a powerful force in American fiction made by Morrison. Employing these theorists, I attempt to read the deferment of overt considerations of "race" in *Typee* as a product of the difficult racial questions confronting America in the cultural period surrounding the work. Examining *Typee* as a unique fictive literary work from a specific historical/cultural period which should stand on its own, I do not attempt to link *Typee* to the biographical facts of Melville's life or his other works.
  20. Bhabha, 4.
  21. See Bhabha, 74-5 and Morrison, 68. Both authors make insightful observations on the connections between stereotyping and fetishization. In this chapter, I am using the term "fetish" in Bhabha's sense as a "disavowal of difference" (derived from Freud's idea of the fetish object as a substitute). Bhabha argues that the "fetish or stereotype give access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence." The fetish, then, which in

- Typee* appears as a foregrounding of the Typee's visible difference from Westerners serves as a means of objectifying them as an "other" group and justifying a colonialist/racist attitude towards the islanders. This definition of the term differs slightly from the psychoanalytic or anthropological definition as it serves a particular colonial (and more specifically, literary) function here.
22. Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 70 (all references are to the Penguin edition).
  23. Melville, 76.
  24. Melville, 76.
  25. In *The Poetics of Imperialism*, Cheyfitz discusses the use of previous knowledge and language by colonizers when addressing those they colonize. See also "Savage Law: The Plot against American Indians in *Johnson and Graham's Lessee v. M'Intosh* and *The Pioneers*, in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 109-28. Cheyfitz reveals the use of a foreign language (English) by the United States' government to bilk Native Americans of tribal lands.
  26. Cheyfitz, "Savage Law," 109.
  27. Melville, 5.
  28. Melville, 93-94.
  29. Melville, 113.
  30. Melville, 118.
  31. John Samson, *White Lies: Melville's Narratives of Facts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 30-31.
  32. Nelson finds this reverting to what is know in many early American texts where white settlers encounter Native Americans. These Others are almost never given a voice in these texts—Mary Rowlandson's narrative is a good example. See also Myra Jehlen, "The Literature of Colonization," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Vol. 1, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 37-54. Jehlen argues that the so-called "prose of objectivity" actually blocks and obscures what it describes and represents the "limits of discourse."
  33. Melville, 144. See Samson (39) for a more detailed discussion of Melville's parody of Western explorers and soldiers providing islanders with weapons.
  34. Melville, 124.
  35. Melville, 124-125.
  36. For a fascinating discussion of representations of the "savage," see David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Travel Writing: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993). Spurr argues that "idealization of the savage . . . has always accompanied the process of Western imperial expansion" and "simply constitutes one more use that can be made of the savage in the realm of Western cultural production" (128).
  37. Melville, 125.
  38. Melville, 125.
  39. Melville, 14.
  40. Melville, 15.
  41. Morrison, 68.
  42. Melville, 15.

43. Melville, 15.
44. Bhabha, 66-7.
45. Bhabha, 67.
46. Morrison, 68.
47. Jehlen, 36.
48. Melville, 13.
49. Melville, 73-74.
50. Melville, 74.
51. Melville, 171-172.
52. Melville, 172. For a discussion of the ceremonial aspects of Typee culture, see Robert C. Suggs, *The Hidden Worlds of Polynesia: A Chronicle of an Archaeological Expedition to Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas Islands* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962). Suggs does not uncover any particular affinity for whiteness in Typee society.
53. Melville, 172.
54. Melville, 180.
55. Melville, 181.
56. Melville, 182.
57. Melville, 182.
58. Melville, 182.
59. Nelson argues that "race" is arbitrarily constructed and "can be viewed in a literary sense as a viable, active metaphor that serves to inscribe and naturalize (as well as subvert) power relationships" (ix). In *Typee*, then, the Western construction of "race" is inadvertently questioned by the text.
60. Melville, 75.
61. Melville, 88.
62. Melville, 95.
63. Melville, 133.
64. Melville, 137.
65. Melville, 137.
66. Melville, 137.
67. Berthold (55-56) discusses Tommo's learning process and the inconsistencies manifest in his grappling with the Typee language.
68. Jehlen sees a conspicuous lack of dialogue in European accounts of Indian encounters in America (which denies a Native American any identity other than non-speaking Object) and in captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson's. As both colonizer and captive (and, of course, narrator), Tommo exhibits similar strategies.
69. Jehlen, 50.
70. Melville, 121.
71. Melville, 161.
72. Melville, 209.
73. Melville, 151-152.
74. Nelson, 20.
75. Melville, 86.
76. Melville, 86.
77. Melville, 218.

78. Berthold sees *Typee* as primarily a captivity narrative, which, I think, denies Tommo's alternate identity as a colonizer in the text. There are many elements of the captivity narrative in *Typee* and Berthold makes a strong case for the text's place in this genre. But Tommo is not "captured" in the traditional sense. Instead, he is a man who finds the Typees and attempts to impose Western culture on them, only to have his status shift to that of colonized. His status as captive is as much a result of his foray into Typee territory and his injury as it is any Typee desire to hold him.
79. Melville, 220.
80. Melville, 220.
81. Melville, 220.
82. Melville, 144.
83. Bhabha, 78.
84. Melville, 219.
85. Melville, 219.
86. For an interesting discussion of the connection between tattooing and the literary marketplace, see John Evelev, "Made in the Marquesas: *Typee*, Tattooing and Melville's Critique of the Literary Marketplace," *Arizona Quarterly* 48 (Winter 1992): 19-45. Evelev argues that *Typee* offers a "critique of the practices and requirements of the literary profession of the United States in the 1840s" by using tattooing as "the scene of Melville's conflicted reaction towards writing" for a capitalist literary marketplace (20-1).
87. Bhabha, 81.
88. In his July 1846 review of *Typee* in *Christian Parlor Magazine*, William Oland Bourne writes: "'An apotheosis of barbarism! A panegyric on cannibal delights! An apostrophe to the spirit of savage felicity! Such are the exclamations instinctively springing from our lips as we read a book entitled *Typee: A Residence in the Marquesas*.'" Quoted in Milton Stern, ed. *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's Typee* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982), 38.
89. I treat cannibalism as a literary device here because there is no confirmation of Typee cannibalism by Tommo. See Walter Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). Arens claims that rumors of European blood rites or human sacrifice are routinely dismissed, but because of Western cultural bias, other cultures, including Polynesians, "are or were man-eaters until contact with the benefits of European influence" (19). He also notes; "excluding survival conditions, I have been unable to uncover adequate documentation of cannibalism as a custom in any form for any society" (21). Parker also claims that tales of cannibalism were freely circulated by whalers and, in particular, captains, who "had a vested interest in making sure their crews knew what the natives might do with deserters" (210).
90. Morrison, 25.
91. Melville, 238.
92. Melville, 239.
93. See Samson (32) who also notes that Tommo does not need to fear cannibalism, but instead the possibility of cultural assimilation.
94. See Caleb Crain, "Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville's Novels," *American Literature* 66 (March 1994): 25-53, for a discussion

of cannibalism in a nineteenth-century historical and cultural context. Crain argues for a link between cannibalism and homosexuality in *Typee* which is beyond the scope of my argument here. See also Gorman Beauchamp, "Montaigne, Melville, and the Cannibals," *Arizona Quarterly* 37 (Winter 1981): 289-309.

95. See Carolyn Karcher, *Shadow Over the Promised Land: Slavery, Race, and Violence in Melville's America* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1980) for a discussion of Melville's position on nineteenth-century ideas on race. Karcher argues that Melville consciously wishes to introduce his readers of racial oppression (including the Typees) in his fiction. Karcher's reading stops short by only acknowledging Melville's introduction of racial difference to his readers in *Typee* (which can be explained more plausibly by viewing *Typee* as a popular adventure narrative drawing on what Melville knew), though, since she does not address the implications of the racial issues that are raised and elided in the text.
96. For a discussion which links American imperialism to Native American mistreatment, see Malini Johar Schueller, "Indians, Polynesians, and Empire-Making: The Case of Herman Melville," in *Genealogy and Literature*, ed. Lee Quinby (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 48-70.
97. See Harrison Hayford, "Afterword to *Typee*," in *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life During a Four Months' Residence in the Valley of the Marquesas* by Herman Melville (New York: Signet, 1964), 309-17. Hayford notes that because of its appeal to adventure and exotic setting, "*Typee* became a best seller, even a literary fad on both sides of the Atlantic" (313).
98. Melville, 124.
99. Rowe, 255-6.
100. Said, 165.





## Chapter Two

# The Colonizing Voice in Cuba: Richard Henry Dana, Jr.'s *To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage*

What I have seen I give as I have seen with Yankee eyes.

Joseph Dimock, writing on his visit to Cuba in 1859

With the 1840 publication of his seafaring narrative *Two Years Before the Mast*, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., established what critics have called a distinctly American literary genre: “the voice from the fore-castle narrative.”<sup>1</sup> In this bestselling work, Dana unceremoniously illustrates with careful detail his experiences as an ordinary sailor aboard the brig *Pilgrim* sailing from Boston to California and back. Dana’s attention to California’s burgeoning trade, natural wonders, and developing cities — such as San Diego and San Francisco — provides an interesting description of California life during the early to mid-nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, because of its faithful depictions of maritime activity and its unwavering attention to a typical sailor’s life at sea, the narrative was an important precursor to later treatment of seafaring by American writers such as Herman Melville and Jack London. Due to this wide-ranging influence and “bestseller” status,<sup>3</sup> *Two Years Before the Mast* has been the subject of numerous literary studies and has received the brunt of Dana criticism.<sup>4</sup> Dana’s 1859 narrative, *To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage*, on the other hand, has remained absent from the imagination of modern critics and readers alike. This oversight is regrettable, because *To Cuba and Back* provides a worthwhile glance into the life of this important American author and a useful resource for the study of both mid-nineteenth-century American foreign relations and antebellum literary production. The actual motivation for Dana’s “vacation voyage,” was unexceptional. In February 1859, feeling overwhelmed by the strain of his legal practice, Dana elected to leave Boston for New York and a

leisurely voyage to Cuba aboard the steamer *Cahawba*. While he relates the details of his maritime journey and subsequent overland tour of Cuba in clear detail, the narrative is laced with significant subtexts that Dana does not treat fully, but which must be addressed. My aim is to situate this “minor” work from a well-known nineteenth-century American author within its antebellum culture in order to examine Dana’s treatment of “race” and simultaneously assess his role in the American colonial/literary project.

The driving force behind Dana’s 1859 journey to Cuba was the physical and mental stress he incurred while working assiduously in Boston towards his commercial and political goals. Though a successful attorney and gentleman of respectable wealth, Dana’s heavy workload necessitated a respite which would return him to Boston refreshed and energized. Just as he had earlier embarked upon the voyage described in *Two Years Before the Mast* to refresh his mind, recuperate his failing eyesight (apparently the result of too much reading as a student at Harvard), and recover from a bout with the measles, Dana felt that a leisurely sailing trip to Cuba might revive his flagging spirits. In his journal, he explains: “Having a chance to get off for a short vacation between the courts, and being a little fatigued, the notion is suddenly suggested to me that I can go to Cuba. This will make as great a change of scene as it is possible to get in so short a time, and is too tempting to be relinquished.”<sup>5</sup> Early in his narrative, Dana describes the uneventful journey aboard the steamer, arrival in the bustling port of Havana, frequent encounters with numerous Americans as he is driven through the city, and his frustration with lackluster hotel accommodations. Dana’s narrative also contains fascinating chapters on Cuban language, the social structure and history of the island, detailed guides to the cities of Havana and Matanzas, explanations of Cuban government, and a chronicle of American influence on the island. His descriptions were so thorough that more than twenty editions were published in the nineteenth-century, and in 1890 it was still the prominent guidebook on the island.<sup>6</sup> Though Dana’s eye for detail creates many vivid portraits in *To Cuba and Back*, the most noteworthy passages are those discussing labor on Cuban sugar plantations, since slavery was, of course, a major issue facing America in 1859. As the Civil War loomed, Dana’s text is indispensable for its expression of an influential Northerner’s attitude towards slavery, race, and plantation commerce — and it is in these sections of the text that their complex social, cultural, and literary intersections are revealed.

Relating in detail his first impressions upon arrival on the island, Dana suggests some of the attitudes and predispositions he will carry to his later plantation visits. Disembarking his steamer in Havana harbor, he writes:

There are no women walking in the streets, except negresses. Those suits of seersucker, with red hats and straw hats and red cockades, are soldiers.... Every third man, perhaps more, and not a few women, are smoking cigars or cigarritos. Here are things moving along, looking like cocks of new mown grass, under way.... There are also mules, asses, and horses with bananas, plantains, oranges, and other fruits in panniers reaching almost to the ground.<sup>7</sup>

Vibrant, full-length descriptions like this one, which highlight Dana's keen tourist-like appreciation for the island's sights and inhabitants, are spread widely throughout the text. (This attention to particulars, though precise, has caused one critic to bemoan Dana's "relentless parade of facts and figures."<sup>8</sup>) Yet even before his revealing visits to the Cuban sugar plantations, Dana begins to divulge some of his traveling "baggage" — an obvious American racial bias. Female islanders of color, described by Dana as "negresses," are not afforded full status as "women" here. Instead, they are given only cursory mention as part of this visual cornucopia. A predilection towards stereotyping continues in Havana as other particularly foreign scenes cross Dana's sight. Gazing into a crowd at the harbor, he sees "here and there the familiar lips and teeth, and vacant, easily pleased face of the Negro."<sup>9</sup> Such condescending portrayal of "black" characters recalls Dana's background as a white male from antebellum America, where a racial hierarchy thrived even in the non-plantation North. Moreover, because of his own privileged social status as a member of the New England elite, Dana's stereotypes are not reserved for black residents of the island. Checking into his Havana hotel, he derides a "swarthy Spanish lad" for "looking very much as if he never washed" and providing marginal service as a bellhop.<sup>10</sup> Because of his location in a developing Caribbean city, Dana did encounter a diverse group of Cuban denizens and was very likely given poor hotel service, but his reliance on these glaring stereotypes undercuts any professed interpretation to which his descriptions lay claim.

Following the lead of postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak, one must give special consideration to "the subject position of the colonial intellectual" in order to assess Dana's literary deployment of stereotypes.<sup>11</sup> These stereotypes reflect two interrelated phenomena. First, in his portraits of Cuban islanders of all races, Dana relies almost exclusively on negative connotative descriptions by using the stereotype — the discursive tool that Homi K. Bhabha has deemed the "major discursive strategy of colonial discourse."<sup>12</sup> Second, these biased views further illustrate what Bhabha calls the fundamental ambivalence that is central to the colonial stereotype. Denigrating the residents of this less-civilized island, Dana is able to assert his own perceived superiority both as visitor and writer while simultaneously admiring some aspects of Cuban culture, character, and physical appearance. Dana's discussion of the Spanish language provides a convenient illustrative example. His first comments suggest a respectful appreciation for this foreign tongue. He

writes: "I yield to no one in my admiration of the Spanish as a spoken language... in its rich, sonorous, musical, and lofty style."<sup>13</sup> Such affection for the Spanish language seems natural for a man whose native Germanic language lacks the mellifluous sounds he would hear on the streets of Cuba. But Dana quickly qualifies his linguistic admiration, continuing: "but I do not like it as spoken by the common people of Cuba, in the streets. Their voices and intonations are thin and eager, very rapid, too much in the lips, and, withal, giving an impression of the passionate and the childish combined."<sup>14</sup> His initial fondness for this European language abruptly shifts because expressing an appreciation for Spanish as spoken in Cuba would indirectly expose a similar delight for the island and its islanders. For a colonizer, such a conscious admission is impossible and disconcerting, hence Dana quickly casts Cuban Spanish as stereotypically "passionate" and "childlike." The result is that he can delight in Castilian Spanish and its European origins while denigrating Cuban use of the language through formulaic pejorative — a telling illustration of his colonial ambivalence. A Westerner who later praises Columbus cannot simultaneously and outwardly admire the culture that has developed on Columbus's "discovery." Therefore, Dana retreats to the more comfortable position of critical observer. Native islanders and the other racially mixed residents have degraded this European language, he concludes, and this disparaging attitude towards Cuba allows him to maintain nominal Subject status for the remainder of his tour.<sup>15</sup>

Further destabilizing Dana's ostensible objectivity is his frequent deference to Europe as a touchstone for his appraisal of a Caribbean island. Such a conspicuous rhetorical tactic is not unusual, however. For many American and European travelers of the period, accounts of non-Western foreigners are often couched in what Ella Shohat and Robert Stam call the imagined "hegemony of the Eurocentric gaze."<sup>16</sup> Clearly, Dana projects this assumed Western superiority in his descriptions — often utilizing European standards as his cultural barometer. For example, upset with his hotel service, he laments: "To a person unaccustomed to the tropics or the south of Europe, I know of nothing more discouraging than the arrival at the inn or hotel. It is nobody's business to attend to you."<sup>17</sup> Of course, for a well-traveled American, the standards for accommodations are the hotels of Europe. Never does Dana assess these tropical accommodations in relation to those in similar emerging cities. His Western colonial mindset is even more strikingly illustrated in his detailed recounting of a visit to a Havana cathedral:

The cathedral, in its exterior, is a plain and quaint old structure, with a tower at each angle in the front; but within, it is sumptuous. There is a floor of variegated marble, obstructed by no seats or screens, tall pillars and rich frescoed walls, and delicate masonry of various colored stone, the prevailing tint being yellow, and a high altar of porphyry. There is a look of the great days of Old Spain about it; and you think that knights and noble worshipped here and en-

riched it from their spoils and conquests. Every new eye turns first to the place within the choir... where, in the wall of the chancel, rest the remains of Christopher Columbus.... It is not often we feel that monuments are surely deserved, in their degree and to the extent of their utterance. But when, in the New World, on an island of that group which he gave to civilized man, you stand before this simple monumental slab, and know that all of him that man can gather up, lies behind it, so overpowering is the sense of the greatness of his deeds, that you feel relieved that no attempt has been made to measure it by any work of man's hands. The little there is, is so inadequate, that you make no comparison. It is mere finger-point, the hic jacet, the sic itur.<sup>18</sup>

I have quoted at length here as an illustration of both Dana's observant descriptive prose and his unwavering adherence to a Western colonial vision of the "New World." The vivid portrait of the cathedral's interior mirrors other fine illustrative passages in the text. Hence one can understand why *To Cuba and Back* stood for many years as a standard travel guide for American readers. Dana's attempts at cultural appraisal are not equally successful, however, as they clearly reveal the limits of his interpretive vision. Allying himself with his educated American readers, Dana adopts an unusual second-person tone in this passage — one which assumes a common background and ideology. "We," he asserts, can surely appreciate this humble yet elegant monument for Columbus, who "gave" the islands of the Caribbean to subsequent European settlers. But in assessing the "greatness" of Columbus' deeds, Dana ignores the ramifications of these "discoveries." David Spurr provides an interesting explanation:

Literary journalism... combines an immediate historical interest with the complex layering of figurative language that conventionally belongs to imaginative literature.... The presence of the writer as part of the narrative scene, moreover, conceals the most obvious affects of ideology and suppresses the historical dimension of the interpretive categories that are brought into play. The writer implicitly claims a 'subjective and independent status' free from larger patterns of interpretation and deriving authority from the direct encounter with real events.<sup>19</sup>

As a result of Dana's need to suppress his Western ideology, a slanted view of both Cuban history and the cathedral's significance emerges in the passage. The textual oversights present in Dana's prose suggest the confusion that often arises in a Western culture's interpretation of its own colonial underpinnings. Moreover, Dana's status as an American contributes strongly to his narrative analysis. The collective ideology of a nation that allowed slavery in half its territory strongly informs and influences his interpretation, and the persistence of this American perspective in *To Cuba and Back* reveals the deep connection between Dana's text and his literary culture.

Dana's condescending attitude towards the residents of Cuba continues unabated as he departs Havana for his tour of the island. His Western bias becomes particularly glaring during discussion of the Plaza at the city of Matanzas — a small city about fifty miles from Havana by sea steamer. Viewing this courtyard outside the Government House, he writes: "In this spot, so fair and so still in the noonday sun, some fourteen years ago, under the fire of the platoons of Spanish soldiers, fell the patriot and poet, one of the few popular poets of Cuba, Gabriel de la Concepción Valdez."<sup>20</sup> Valdez was executed by the Spanish for allegedly leading a movement of slaves for their freedom, which "struck... terror into Cuba."<sup>21</sup> Dana then proceeds to write of the poet known primarily by his pen name of Placido: "He was a man of genius and a man of valor, but — he was a mulatto!"<sup>22</sup> The praise for Placido is not surprising, as Dana would later pay tribute to John Brown, whose raid on Harper's Ferry and execution occurred only a few months later, and *Toussaint L'Ouverture*. But Dana's equivocal attitude towards Valdez surfaces in his choice to end the sentence and his discussion of this hero with "he was a mulatto" — casting doubt on Dana's earnestness in recognizing Placido's accomplishments. Dana's initial admiration is characteristically tempered by the problematic skin color of the rebel — highlighting a reversion to stereotypical racism and undermining the full force of Placido's accomplishments for American readers of *To Cuba and Back*. Dana underscores this ambivalence towards the mulatto as he describes his entrance into a bullfight stadium. Surveying the crowd he writes: "Thankful I am, and creditable it is, that there are no women."<sup>23</sup> Females, he muses, should be shielded from this bloody spectacle so prevalent in Cuba in order to confine the indignity of the bullfight to male eyes. In his next sentence, however, Dana reveals his racial mindset as he writes: "Yes, there, are two mulatto women in a seat on the sunny side... [a]nd there are two shriveled, dark, Creole women, in a box."<sup>24</sup> Not quite falling into his category as "white" women, these females of mixed racial blood foreground Dana's indeterminate view of their social status. They do not garner the respect given to "white" Euro-American women, therefore he can be thankful that there are no "women" in the stadium. Focusing on the black blood in the mulatto and Creole women, Dana simply reflects the discriminatory practice of defining "black" and "white" in mid-nineteenth-century America.<sup>25</sup> Denied individuality, these Cuban women instead are merely part of a widespread racial hierarchy that existed throughout the United States and Cuba. Along with Placido, their skin color places them in a subordinate position which Dana stresses in his representations.

Studying colonial rule from a decidedly Feminist perspective, Chandra Mohanty argues that "colonial states created racially and sexually differentiated classes conducive to a ruling process fundamentally grounded in economic surplus extraction."<sup>26</sup> While Dana illustrates a belief in sexual difference between mulat-

tos, Creoles, and white women, the division of racial classes in Cuba is also visible in his examination of the slave labor driving the Cuban agricultural economy. His first images of industry depict Coolie laborers who have come from China and indentured themselves to work on sugar plantations in Matanzas. Watching the laborers and commenting on their bodies which "seemed thin and frail," he fortuitously encounters an American shipmaster who imports labor into Cuba. The captain explains to Dana:

"the importer of the coolie gets \$400 a head for them from the purchaser... and [they] are bound to eight years during which they may be held to all the service that a slave is subject to. They are more intelligent and are put to higher labor than the Negro.... It would not do to flog a coolie. Idolaters that they are, they have a notion of the dignity of the human body, at least as against strangers, which does not allow them to submit to the indignity of corporal chastisement."<sup>27</sup>

I will defer discussion of slavery on the islands until examination of Dana's plantation tours. Of immediate concern at this point is Dana's troubling comparison of black and Chinese laborers. Though Dana certainly looks down upon the Chinese imported into Cuba throughout the text, he affords them status above black slaves and is careful to quote the corroborating statements of a fellow American for support. Mirroring Dana's representation of mulattos, these comparisons represent a racial hierarchy carried from American culture that informs much of his ostensible analysis. The result is that while he does disparage the Chinese in Cuba, Dana nonetheless delights in aspects of their appearance and situates the Chinese above any black characters he has encountered both on the island and in America. White serves as the privileged skin color in Dana's Eurocentric worldview, but throughout his narrative, Dana also establishes differentiating levels within his views on race. White is at the top of the hierarchy; Mulattos, Creoles, and Coolies come next; those of entirely black blood are relegated to the bottom of his classification system. Dana's popular concept of race is, of course, bound to his cultural connections to pre-Civil War America. American law continued to recognize anyone with a hint of black blood as Negro and legally inferior — a situation which led to enslavement in the South and social discrimination in the North. Written expression of this hierarchy is hardly unique, but Dana's social and political status confuses the situation. Though a Northerner and Free-Soiler, Dana nonetheless subscribes to the common idea of a racial status system at home and abroad. The ramifications extend to other portions of his text, for as he begins to shift his focus to slave labor on the island, Dana begins a persistent pattern of both obliquely and directly conflating slave labor with the economic benefits Cuba holds for America.

Particularly significant within *To Cuba and Back* are Dana's plantation visits, which perform the attendant roles of carrying his stereotypical notions of race literally and imaginatively deeper into Cuba, and highlighting the economic underpinnings of slavery. As Dana visits the sugar plantations lining Cuba's interior, his narrative further exposes attitudes towards non-white characters — particularly slaves on sugar plantations who were the majority of Cuban residents at the time.<sup>28</sup> In many ways, visiting these plantations was the ultimate goal of Dana's visit, and his guarded enthusiasm is clear in many descriptive passages. During his sojourn to the inland region of Limonar he comments excitedly: "I am now to get my first view of the interior of Cuba."<sup>29</sup> Of course, Dana brings his keen eye for descriptive detail along as he travels. In the island's core, he is fascinated by the abundant tropical vegetation — describing bananas and plantains with "the stalk turning into a trunk [and] a thin soft coating, half changed to bark."<sup>30</sup> He also sentimentally depicts the cocoa plant as a "sad, weeping tree [with] its long yellow-green leaves drooping to the ground."<sup>31</sup> Still engaged by the "virgin" landscape, Dana also notices the "thickets... rich with wild flowers of all forms and colors" and finally the "sea of cane-fields."<sup>32</sup> Dana's attention to the lush countryside is understandable, but more striking is that his cool detached gaze continues as he visits the plantations at Limonar. In this agricultural region, he is first forced to confront the essence of the slavery that drives Cuba's thriving sugar industry. Arriving at a sugar plantation, which he explains is called an "ingenio" in Spanish, Dana comments: "It is a busy scene of industry, in the afternoon sun of a languid Cuban day"; while he notices "Negroes, men and women and children, some cutting the cane, some loading the carts, and some tending the mill and furnace."<sup>33</sup> Because he fails to engage this significant scene fully with his language, Dana's descriptive tone is surprisingly removed — paralleling the language he uses when describing bananas, trees, or birds. Observing this slave-filled background, Dana omits commentary on the difficulty the workers face, or more than cursory mention of the harsh labor conditions. Instead, black workers are treated with the same observant eye as the natural scenery. Dana's failure to adopt a more sympathetic tone towards black Cubans here may represent what C. Harvey Gardiner calls the "paradox" Dana encountered in Cuba. He explains: "Physically, it was a paradise of tropical skies, warm waters, shimmering sands, swaying palms, rich earth — an Eden. Culturally, however, island life was depressing, darkened by political absolutism, monoculture, stratified society — a Hell."<sup>34</sup> While Gardiner seems consciously to overlook some of the "hell" of slavery here, the contrast to which he draws attention is important. Dana appears intentionally to neglect these obvious contradictions, as he turns his focus back to his own privileged Subject status as genteel traveler. Later on the Limonar plantation, after a black man is dispatched to carry his bags to the plantation house, Dana writes: "My Negro stops at the path and



touches his hat, waiting permission to go to the piazza with the luggage; for Negroes do not go the house door without previous leave in strictly ordered plantations.”<sup>35</sup> Rather than critique the inequality of a slave system that forces this black man into a subordinate position, Dana assumes ownership, using the possessive “my” to describe the man carrying his bags. Of course, Dana was not a slave owner, but in his racial hierarchy, the natural role is to assume temporary surrogate custody over this man of color. Faced with a confusing situation, Dana falls back upon a race and class system which positions him firmly in control of this foreign environment. In addition, this choice of language highlights Dana’s decision not to question the arrangement which placed each man in his assigned role. During this plantation visit, then, Dana fails to offer the expected social commentary, instead maintaining the role of observer even when confronted with glaring racial inequality worthy of his attention.

Apparently mesmerized by the plush treatment he receives on the Limonar plantation, Dana continues his surprisingly neutral look at the slave system as he provides cultural background on plantation society. In Cuba, he notes, sugar plantations have replaced most coffee plantations, and these contemporary plantations are no longer home to the ruling family; they are governed and administered by hired managers. Dana denounces this situation as he explains: “the estates, largely abandoned by the families of the planters, suffer the evils of absenteeism, while the owners live in the suburbs of Havana and Matanzas.”<sup>36</sup> The problem, he asserts, is that now “[t]he slave system loses its patriarchal character.”<sup>37</sup> He further laments that without the bond between owners and slaves, “all those things that may ameliorate the legal relations of master and slave, and often give to the face of servitude itself precarious but interesting features of beauty and strength — these they must not look to have.”<sup>38</sup> His time on this plantation with its accompanying firsthand knowledge of the slave system has not led Dana to pointed evaluation of slavery in Cuba and America. Instead, he focuses his critique on the loss of the traditional patriarchal master/slave relationship, which erodes what he sees as the “beauty and strength” of a traditional plantation. Dana’s noncritical stance is also revealed in his look at the neverending processing of sugar cane. Observing this incessant work, he comments: “There are four agents: steam, fire, cane juice, and Negroes”; and is intrigued by the scene of “condensed and determined labor.”<sup>39</sup> His observant eye does not dwell upon the miserable existence which the steam and fire create. His language not only conflates black skin with the torments of steam and fire, but also with the economic product of the slave system: sugar. The connection seems lost on Dana, however, for after this portion of the plantation tour, he is pleased to sit “for several hours with [his] host and his son, in the verandah, engaged in conversation agreeable and instructive.”<sup>40</sup> Social criticism, it seems, is forsaken for a refined evening with other affluent gentlemen. As he

closes his sugar plantation chapter, Dana's only concerns are with his accommodations. He concludes: "The only moral I am entitled to draw from this is, that a well-ordered private house with slave labor, may be more neat and creditable than an ill-ordered public house with free labor."<sup>41</sup> Incisive critique is abandoned in this section of the narrative for a business-like view of the sugar-making process and superficial consideration of his "large and comfortable" sleeping-room. Apologetic Dana biographer Richard Gale attempts an explanation: "Free Soiler though he was, Dana probably restrained his criticism of Cuban slavery since he was a foreigner in Cuba and a guest of an aristocratic Spanish family at Limonar."<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, this strained justification fails to take into account that Dana was writing from a position of distance — both in time and space — as he composed the text of *To Cuba and Back* in Boston from his travel notes. Back in America, Dana had the opportunity to use his publication for effecting the type of change advocated by the Free Soil Party, but because of his immersion in a complex cultural system, Dana shuns any politically charged commentary.

Of course, we might view Dana's narrative descriptions with little surprise since he is an American writing in 1859, and the product of a country that countenanced slavery in half its territory. But a look at Dana's background casts some confusion on his decision to brook the ugly business of the Cuban slave system. In 1848, a convention was held in Buffalo for the purpose of forming a new political party. This convention produced the Free Soil Party, which championed opposition to extension of slavery into United States territories as the central component of its platform. Dana was a central figure at the convention, and in his journal he notes the cooperation and progress that emerged from what he called the "noble & providentially successful convention."<sup>43</sup> In addition to his ardent participation in the Free Soil Party, Dana also used his legal practice to aid the fight against slavery's influence in the North. On numerous occasions, he defended escaped slaves who were detained under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which required that they be returned to their owners in the South.<sup>44</sup> The most famous of these was the 1851 case of Thomas Sims who had escaped from the South to Boston aboard a ship only to face immediate detention upon disembarking. Accepting Sims' case, Dana argued the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law and clearly condemned the Southern practice of slavery as an institution. Likewise, upon the escape of one fugitive slave from police captivity, Dana comments in his private journal: "How can any right minded man do else than rejoice at the rescue of a man from the hopeless, en[d]less slavery to wh[ic]h a recovered fugitive is always doomed."<sup>45</sup> Though loathe to condone overt violent activity, Dana nonetheless viewed the Fugitive Slave Law as immoral — a position which he frequently argued in court. Moreover, Dana was acutely aware of the allure of freedom after captivity — the expression used by many sailors to describe life at sea under an

autocratic captain. After receiving shore leave to visit California as a sailor aboard the *Pilgrim*, he rejoices in *Two Years Before the Mast* at being “escaped the confinement, labor, and strict rule of the vessel — of being once more in my life, though only for a day, my own master.”<sup>46</sup> The moral atrocity of slavery, the pain of confinement faced by slaves in both America and Cuba, and the desirability of liberation certainly should not have been far from Dana’s thoughts as he wrote *To Cuba and Back*, then, and even within this text Dana was not averse to social criticism. Attending bullfights in Havana in order to “learn the character of the national recreation,” Dana is appalled, calling the bullfighters “cowards” and denouncing the “meanness... cruelty... and impotency” of the crowd.<sup>47</sup> He leaves the bullfights in disgust and anger. But this same irritation does not accompany his visits to slaveholding plantations — where human beings were subject to indignities far worse than those he denounces at the bullfights. Even Gale is forced to concede: “As the guest of Don Juan Chartrand and his family [at Limonar], Free Soiler Dana surprisingly sympathized with the owners rather than with the slaves.”<sup>48</sup>

Why, then, would an active Free-Soiler not show more antipathy towards slavery in Cuba and seek to persuade his reading audience of the need for abolition both in America and abroad? Gardiner has claimed that “[u]ntil his trip to Cuba... [Dana’s] knowledge of slavery lacked firsthand information,” and argues that, as a result of such naïveté, Dana was unable to do much more than observe.<sup>49</sup> Yes, Dana had not visited any Southern plantations in the United States before his trip to Cuba, and the entire experience may have placed him in the role of shocked observer. But the reason for Dana’s striking neutrality towards the plantations has deeper underpinnings. He was an intelligent and socially active man; he had frequently championed the freedom of fugitive slaves; and he actively sought out the plantations in Cuba for observation. This was no naïve onlooker. Instead, Dana’s narrative subjectivity is a direct reflection of his antebellum American cultural milieu. Richard Brodhead has argued that “schemes of literary production... [are] bound up with a distinct social audience... [and help] call together some particular social grouping, a portion of the whole potential public identified not only by its readerly interests, but by other unifying social interests as well.”<sup>50</sup> For Dana’s reading audience, slavery is indeed an important social issue, but eschewing extended criticism of the slave system in Cuba allows Dana to accommodate a politically moderate audience and maintain his role as leisurely traveler, not aggressive social activist, throughout his narrative. Without the literary tools to compose the type of sentimental fiction produced during the period by writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe or Louisa May Alcott,<sup>51</sup> Dana may have simply avoided a potentially controversial treatment of this divisive topic. Moreover, without “first hand knowledge” of slavery, Dana reveals the limits of his Free Soil Party and exposes a central platform weakness in its failure to take into account the human reality of plantation society that transcends political abstractions.

Dana was certainly not unique in visiting Cuba during the nineteenth-century, and *To Cuba and Back* reflects an ongoing trend of racial elision echoed by a number of his contemporaries in their Cuban travel narratives. Two English travelers, Anthony Trollope and Amelia Mathilda Murray, also traveled to Cuba during the 1850s and published their reflections in book-length treatments.<sup>52</sup> In particular, the Cuba sections of Trollope's 1859 travel diary, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, reflect many of Dana's actions and attitudes in *To Cuba and Back*. In Havana, for example, Trollope explains: "My first object after landing was to see a slave sugar estate."<sup>53</sup> Like Dana, he is fascinated by the thriving sugar plantations and the slave labor that feeds them. After his plantation tour, Trollope projects overt racial stereotyping as well, writing of the slaves: "From all that I could hear, as well as from what I could see, I have reason to think that, regarding them as beasts, they are well treated."<sup>54</sup> Choosing to uphold an essentially racist bias, Trollope gives no attention to the conditions or motivations of the slave system. In the end, his only concern for Cuba is "that it may speedily be reckoned among the annexations of the United States."<sup>55</sup> Glaring racism and callous disregard for the Cuban people is also reflected in Amelia Murray's tale of her 1855 trip to Cuba via the United States, *Letters from the United States, Cuba, and Canada*. First touring the American South, she is not appalled by slavery and actually argues against abolition — suggesting instead that slavery should be "regulated" so that slaves may someday purchase their freedom. Her casual attitude continues in Cuba, where she sympathetically quotes an Englishwoman who laments to Murray: "no one unaccustomed can judge of the annoyance it is to be served by Negroes, and that [I] shall bless the day when [I am] enabled to return, perhaps to England, where [I] will no longer be tormented by slave labor."<sup>56</sup> Murray herself exhibits parallel condescending attitudes, asserting that "the Coolies are a miserable race"; and continuing: "I do not think people in England have any idea of the idleness which characterizes black people."<sup>57</sup> Of course, the British were actively involved in many colonial endeavors during the nineteenth century, and both Trollope's and Murray's narratives merely reflect their national imperial mindset. Each confirms Bhabha's belief that colonial discourse features "dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness."<sup>58</sup> Using stereotypes to categorize slaves as "beasts," and "miserable race[s]" full of "idleness," English colonial writers are able to maintain Anglo racial hegemony and reassert their own perceived white cultural superiority. Mohanty explains: "colonial rule operated by setting up visible, rigid, and hierarchical distinctions between the colonizers and the colonized. The physical and symbolic separation of the races was deemed necessary to maintain social distance and authority over subject peoples."<sup>59</sup> This thriving British colonial system had been in place for many years around the world — a fact that informs the work of many English writers. The colonial connection to

American writers is not as clear, however. Since the United States was only gradually emerging as a colonial power before the Civil War, what informed the American literary mind when confronting Cuba?

Because the island was a convenient and popular destination, many Americans besides Dana visited Cuba as well, and their accounts often mimic Dana's descriptions of the region.<sup>60</sup> Joseph J. Dimock compiled a travel diary during a visit in February and March of 1859 — the same time Dana was touring Cuba. Dimock begins much like Dana, commenting upon the "charming" harbor of Havana and the "waving palms" about the city.<sup>61</sup> Dimock also deprecates the Cubans, calling them "about the dirtiest people extant."<sup>62</sup> Dimock, too, visited a sugar plantation, where he writes of the slaves he saw: "They are constitutionally indolent, and have no more judgment than an animal"; and calls the owner of the plantation "too indulgent" for sparing whippings.<sup>63</sup> He also acknowledges that Cuba is the "hot-bed of slavery," but argues that "the slaves have more privileges than in the states."<sup>64</sup> Though he was born and raised primarily in the South before immigrating to Connecticut to attend school, Dimock's views suggest a particularly Southern bent towards slavery. But this accommodating attitude bespeaks a trend in nineteenth-century Cuban travel writing that transcends regional boundaries. Another avowed Free Soiler, William Cullen Bryant had also visited Cuba in 1849 and sent his letters to the *Evening Post*, where he was editor.<sup>65</sup> Bryant traveled to Cuba both to relax and record his observations, and one of his first letters references slavery on the island. Witnessing a ship full of slaves land at Guines, he writes: "the slave trade is now fully revived."<sup>66</sup> Though shocked that more than one hundred Africans had died during passage on the ship, Bryant quickly turns his attention to other matters. He writes: "more than half of the island of Cuba has never been reduced to tillage. Immense tracts of the rich black or red mould of the island, accumulated on the coral rock, are yet waiting the hand of the planter to be converted into profitable sugar estates."<sup>67</sup> Assuming the role of surveyor and emphasizing the "profitable" potential for plantation owners, Bryant's comments suggest the underlying motive behind Dana's neutral presentation of the slavery situation in Cuba. As an enterprising American like Dana, Bryant could not hide his pleasure at this "virgin land" ready for tilling, and as a result, both he and Dana overlook the conspicuous inequality of the island's slave system. For these successful male writers, links to the powerful emerging colonial/capitalist structure in America overshadow any political or social commentary in their work.

At the same time Dana and Dimock were visiting Cuba, another well-known American writer, Julia Ward Howe, was also traveling on the island, and her accounts offer an interesting counterpoint to these American male readings of the island's cultural and economic systems. Dana and Howe were old Massachusetts acquaintances, and the two met and socialized briefly in Havana during their

simultaneous visits in 1859. A clear mutual respect and admiration existed between them, and Dana describes Howe as “the accomplished author and conversationalist, whom it is an exhilaration to meet anywhere, much more in a land of strangers.”<sup>68</sup> In February of 1860, about one year after her visit, Howe published *A Trip to Cuba*, and in her narrative, she diverges from Dana to present a decidedly different pose towards slavery and the Cuban plantations. Howe was, of course, a progressive social activist, and she both edited and contributed to the antislavery paper *The Commonwealth*,<sup>69</sup> so her cultural criticism is not unexpected. Like Dana, she does display some of her genteel, privileged background, as she is quick to criticize the “infernal tea” and lament the difficult “mastication of a stale roll, with butter, also stale.”<sup>70</sup> Her social status and its direct contrast to typical Cuban society is likewise visible in Dana’s description of a dinner with Julia, her husband Dr. S. G. Howe, and Theodore Parker at Le Grand’s in Havana: “The passers-by almost put their faces into the room, and the women and children of the poorer order look wistfully in upon the luxurious guests, the colored glasses, the red wines, and the golden fruits.”<sup>71</sup> The “poorer” residents of Havana can only pine over the amenities enjoyed by these foreigners, and it is clear here that Dana and Howe are both privileged members of America’s wealthy classes. Unlike Dana, however, Howe’s social class does not appear to influence her interpretations of the Cuban plantations. Because she was a woman, Howe was not permitted to see the plantations in the detail that Dana did, and therefore could only relay what she heard. But what she saw she expressed boldly:

True, we have heard of horrible places in the interior of the island, where the crack of a whip pauses only during four hours in the twenty-four, where, so to speak, the sugar smells of the blood of slaves. We have heard of plantations whereon there are no women, where the wretched laborers have not the privileges of beasts, but are only human machines, worked and watched. There, not even the mutilated semblance of family ties and domestic surroundings alleviates the sore strain upon life and limb. How can human creatures endure, how inflict this?<sup>72</sup>

As a woman given only limited views of the plantations, Howe does not provide exhaustive glimpses into plantation life, but her choice of language here is important. Though she does emphasize the harsh conditions — twenty-hour workdays full of whips, and treatment which casts humans as beasts — Howe focuses her particular concern and her attention to “domestic” matters. The evils of these plantations, she explains to her readers, are magnified by the lack of women, “family ties,” and “domestic surroundings.”

Her emphasis on the domestic places Howe within a particular context of nineteenth-century American women’s writing. While Dana was reluctant to use

sentimentality in his discussion of slavery, Howe welcomes domestic references as a link to her readers. Jane Tompkins has called this writing by nineteenth-century women “a monumental effort to reorganize culture from a woman’s point of view.”<sup>73</sup> Of course, *A Trip to Cuba* does not actively seek to deploy the sentimental model as seen in a text like *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Nonetheless, moved by her visits to Cuba and the South, Howe does actively argue against slavery in America and abroad, asserting: “The enslaved population of Cuba and our own South must... attain in time a condition in which slavery shall be impossible.”<sup>74</sup> Moreover, while overtly critical of most components of the plantation slave system, Howe does praise the “far more humane” slave laws in Cuba. She explains that slaves could purchase freedom for themselves and their offspring, while also requesting sale to a new master if mistreated. These laws, she cautions, are not a substitute for abolition of the vicious system, but she does argue to her American readers for adoption of laws insuring better treatment of slaves in America before eventual abolition is attained. In addition, Wilgus notes that Howe also scrutinizes the rigid social structure and poor educational system of Cuba with the hope that reform might someday be enacted.<sup>75</sup> Dana, on the other hand, makes no such progressive claims in his narrative, and *To Cuba and Back* fails to reach the level of social and cultural criticism offered by his friend and contemporary.

We can see, then, that in Dana’s *To Cuba and Back*, the opportunity exists to provide both an informative description of America’s southern neighbor and an incisive critique of the institution of slavery outside America’s politically charged environment. Dana, however, supplies a thorough travel narrative full of colorful, but apologetic observations. His modest attempt at social criticism is inhibited by his failure to posit meaningful firsthand arguments about the slave system. Most importantly, Dana saves his harshest criticism for bullfighting and Cuban manners, a narrative act striking for its inconsistency and negligence, since Dana was devoted to the cause of halting slavery’s expansion. Toni Morrison has written that “for both black and white American writers, in a wholly racialized society, there is no escape from racially inflected language, and the work writers do to unhobble the imagination from the demands of that language is complicated, interesting, and definitive.”<sup>76</sup> Morrison’s claim about authors and race is particularly relevant to Dana’s text. Seeing the evils of slavery for the first time, Dana is faced with an opportunity to apply his political ideals to an active critique which would be read by a significant portion of the literate American population. Confined by what he saw and his own cultural background, he instead capitulates to the overriding culture of his day. Hardly supporting slavery, but not denouncing it either, Dana negotiates an authorial line delineated primarily by his cultural period and the literary marketplace.

The motivations for this literary high wire act are, I believe, rooted in the burgeoning American imperialism of the nineteenth century. Situated as an essential trading partner able to supply sugar demands and serve as a market for American exports, Cuba held an important place for American business interests. Moreover, the history of Cuban sugar manufacturing plays an important role in the structure of this reciprocal commercial relationship. By the mid-nineteenth century, Cuba had assumed an indispensable role as supplier of agricultural products to America. Sugar and coffee were the primary exports to the United States, and the ease with which American traders could supply Cuba with American manufactured products and technology assured that both sides benefited from the arrangement. Pérez explains that during the first half of the nineteenth century, “North American traders shrewdly pursued the Cuban market, providing slaves and manufactured goods at reasonable prices, often extending generous credit arrangements and accepting sugar and molasses as payment” so that by 1865, Cuba was the United States’ “single most important” trading partner.<sup>77</sup> This commercial ascendancy had not always been Cuba’s place, however. As the island’s elite plantation owners benefited from trade with the United States, their success was also tied to the demise of slavery in other regions.<sup>78</sup> Prior to 1791, the world’s largest sugar producer was the island of Saint-Domingue. In 1791, however, slaves revolted, and planters fled the island, abandoning their crops, and causing sugar prices to rise dramatically. This situation assisted Cuba and facilitated its rise to prominence as the world’s leading sugar-exporting island.<sup>79</sup> Though the development of what Philip D. Curtin terms the “New World tropical slave plantations” saw its fruition in Cuba and the Southern United States, he explains that Brazil was actually the place where these plantations were launched.<sup>80</sup> Curtin also emphasizes the significance of the “sugar revolution” which brought the technology, structure, and African slaves into the eastern Caribbean. He writes:

It continued the institutional and economic patterns already developed in Brazil, but this new version of the plantation complex was more specialized, more dependent on networks of maritime, intercontinental communication. It was also an important step into the North Atlantic, and it was, incidentally, the stepping stone that was to bring the African slave trade and a peripheral version of the plantation complex to the United States.<sup>81</sup>

Viewing the slave plantation system in Cuba, Dana was witnessing the parallel to slavery in the United States, but he chose not to lash out against this terrible situation. Dana does realize that there is a world of hidden slavery that he has not witnessed as he warns his readers: “If persons coming from the North are credulous enough to suppose that they will see chains and stripes and tracks of blood... they will probably, also, be credulous enough to suppose they have seen the whole of



slavery.”<sup>82</sup> Indeed there is suggestion here — with later references to the plight of runaway slaves, bloodhounds, and slave hunters — that Dana recognizes the horror of this system. His critique, however, is limited by the capitalist paradise that Cuba represents for influential American interests.

Historian Philip Foner has connected Cuban-American economic ties to the Spanish-American War of 1898. He writes:

the Cuban policy of the United States culminating in the use of force against Spain has its root in the rise of monopoly capitalism and its drive for markets. There were political, social, and psychological roots, too... But these reinforced economic factors. The predominance of economic factors in the sequence of events which led to the outbreak of conflict between the United States and Spain has been sufficiently demonstrated in recent historiography to warrant the conclusion that the Spanish-American War was indeed an imperialist war.<sup>83</sup>

The implications of these connections between colonialism and capitalism are arresting. If we view the Spanish-American War as America’s first “imperialist” conflict, then the events that led to this colonial culmination on Cuba are the same forces driving American imperialism. Since Cuban economic dependence on America in the mid- and late nineteenth century propelled much of the Cuban-American relationship during the period, American travel writing, such as Dana’s *To Cuba and Back*, reflected the importance of this new and thriving market. Noel J. Kent argues that United States’ imperialism “was a response to the internal contradictions (and failures) generated by the capitalist system”; and continues: “Rather than reorganize society in a manner that would reallocate resources on a different basis (inevitably to their own detriment), rather than redistribute national income more equitably to create additional demand within the domestic economy, the elites chose to implement imperialist policies abroad.”<sup>84</sup> As a member of this American elite, Dana’s textual representation of the island simply reinforces this dominant American policy. In a telling illustration of this cultural-literary connection, he concludes *To Cuba and Back* with a focus on Cuba’s abundant material resources. Dana writes: “Cuba contains more good harbors than does any part of the United States. Its soil is very rich, and there are no large wastes of sand... It has mines of copper, and probably of iron... [and it has] probably a large amount of a very soft, bituminous coal, which can be used for manufactures.”<sup>85</sup> The usually detached observations of this “vacation voyage” have, it seems, been transformed into an imperial promotional tract. Dana closes his discussion of Cuban resources by further highlighting the island’s commerce:

That which has been to me, personally, most unexpected, is the industry of the island. It seems to me that, allowing for the heat of noon and the debilitating

effect of the climate, the industry in agriculture and trade is rather striking. The sugar crop is enormous. The annual exportation of about 400,000 tons.... There is also about half a million hogsheads of molasses exported annually. Add to this the coffee, tobacco and copper, and a general notion may be got of the industry and productions of the island.<sup>86</sup>

Dana's emphasis on the island's resources lends a prospector's eyes to his descriptions, and sends a very specific message to his readers. This island, he implies, is a place where America should pursue colonial interest and into which American capital and influence should flow. Such a vision of Cuba and its "striking" natural resources may bode well economically for the United States, but Dana's vision ignores the foundation upon which these thriving Cuban exports were built.

As an economic system, slavery's success relies upon the area into which it is introduced and deployed. Harmannus Hoetink explains: "the chances for slavery are not great where there are closed resources... [but] with open resources, an increase in the number of slaves means an increase in the wealth of their master."<sup>87</sup> The decision by Dana and Bryant to emphasize the island's "[i]mmense tracts of... rich black or red mould... accumulated on the coral rock... waiting the hand of the planter to be converted into profitable sugar estates," suggests to an educated, middle- and upper-class American readership that significant economic opportunity exists on Cuba. Of course, with slavery abolished in the North, and restrictions on the expansion of slavery being advocated by Dana's own Free-Soil Party, Cuba comes to occupy a significant place in the mid-nineteenth-century American imagination. Here, with rich soil, and abundant, almost guiltless slave labor, America can harbor a trading partner able to supply its many import and export needs. Here, too, the fundamental divisive issue confronting the nation in 1860 can be subverted in favor of sugar, coffee, and near-limitless potential wealth. Cuba offered Americans a friendly neighbor that served as an extraterritorial moral dumping ground, where fertile and abundant land kept prices low and profits high, and where slave labor could be collectively countenanced by readers who shared Dana's ambivalence towards race.

Why was Dana so inattentive to race as a critical component of slavery? The answer again rests in his perceived American superiority and his immersion in America's dominant racial hierarchy. Bhabha provides a germane interpretive scheme, as he argues: "The exercise of colonialist authority... requires the production of differentiations, individuations, identity effects through which discriminatory practices can map out subject populations that are tarred with the visible and transparent mark of power."<sup>88</sup> Dana's entire treatment of the topic of slavery reflects this harsh "differentiation," and ultimate critical elision, practiced in order to effect a colonial/economic harmony in his text. In his final full chapter, entitled, "A Summing Up: Society, Politics, Religion, Slavery, Resources, and Reflec-

tions,” Dana devotes eight pages to his observations on slavery in Cuba. Here, one expects, this Free-Soiler will finally attack the institution as barbaric and support its rapid demise. But this is not the case, as his final thoughts wander from conjectures on the number of slaves to the opportunity for a slave to purchase his freedom. Dana reasons that “the fact that one Negro in every four is free, indicates that the laws favor emancipation” and notes that “[i]n point of civil privileges, the free blacks are the equals of whites.”<sup>89</sup> This argument, of course, applies only to superficial civil rights — failing to account for cultural discrimination based on race. At this point, a comparison to black Americans is in order for Dana, and he surmises of freedmen: “As to their social position, I have not the means of speaking. I should think it quite as good as it is in New England, if not better.”<sup>90</sup> Concluding his treatment of slavery before proceeding to examine Cuban material resources, Dana attempts a meager critical claim. He writes: “The established facts are, that one race, having all the power in its hands, holds another race in slavery.... What is likely to be the effect on all parties to this system, judging from all we know of human nature?”<sup>91</sup> But even this assertion, which subtly allows that the slave system is damaging to both black and white participants, is tainted by his clinging to an innate “white” superiority. As a result, Dana can never fully extricate himself, or his text, from the shadow of racism in America.

The element of race also underlies American political ties to Cuba during the nineteenth century — a trend reflected strongly in *To Cuba and Back* — and is perhaps the key reason for American writers’ inattentiveness to slavery issues on Cuba. In his book *Race and Manifest Destiny*, Reginald Horsman suggests a connection:

Agrarian and commercial desires and the search for national and personal wealth and security were at the heart of mid-nineteenth century expansion, but the racial ideology that accompanied and permeated these drives helped determine the nature of America’s specific relationships with the peoples encountered in the surge to world power. By the 1850s it was generally believed in the United States that a superior American race was destined to shape the destiny of much of the world.<sup>92</sup>

A belief in this concept of a “superior race” fueled much of America’s attitude towards Cuba during the period. But there were earlier links as well. American political and economic interest in Cuba had a long history which culminated in the mid-nineteenth century. Many years earlier, President Thomas Jefferson had written: “I candidly confess, that I have looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States.”<sup>93</sup> Later, as economic ties expanded, President James K. Polk offered Spain one hundred million dollars for the island with no success, an offer which Franklin Pierce, who in his inaugural

address called Cuba his “number one foreign concern,” raised unsuccessfully to one hundred thirty million dollars in 1854.<sup>94</sup> That America in the nineteenth century was interested in acquisition of Cuba seemed logical. In addition to the economic motives, “control over the island was perceived as a natural and logical extension of boundaries manifestly destined to expand, a way of defending territorial gains of past expansion and the means of future ones.”<sup>95</sup> Cuba would provide America with a vital port for protection of its Southern coast and the Caribbean, so securing the island became more an imperative than a possibility. British writer Anthony Trollope sums up the sentiment towards American designs on Cuba best: “The world is wide enough for us and our offspring, and may we be well content that we have it nearly all between us. Let them fulfill their destiny in the West, while we do so in the East.”<sup>96</sup> In the eyes of Trollope and others, the dominant colonial paradigm suited both Britain and the United States, and Cuba was therefore considered a natural American acquisition. But American interest in Cuba was not solely a one-sided imperial affair. Before 1861, annexation was also logical to those in power in Cuba. The two most serious problems facing these plantation owners and traders were that Spain was hinting at an abolition of slavery while also charging heavy tariffs on Cuban exports to fund projects in Europe. Union with the United States seemed to offer these frustrated plantation owners the opportunity to expand trade and maintain slavery on the island.<sup>97</sup> For America’s “superior race,” then, control of the “inferior” people of Cuba appeared to be a natural act for an incipient colonial power. Dana comments: “if the connection with Spain is dissolved in any way, [Cuba] will probably be substantially under the protection of some other power, or part of another empire.”<sup>98</sup> This implied power, Dana and his readers understand, is the United States.

Of course, Cuba was never annexed by the United States; Interest in Cuba waned after the 1860s, which has been attributed to the outbreak and outcome of the Civil War.<sup>99</sup> Of course, after the War, America simply could not annex an island which practiced slavery no matter how great the economic and defensive gain. This diminished American attention has deeper causes than the end of the Civil War, however, and it is here that race is clearly connected to American imperialism as a constraining force limiting expansion. Northern Free-Soiler James Shepard Pike “expressed a common position succinctly in 1853 when he wrote that the United States did not want a territory that was filled ‘with black, mixed, degraded, ignorant, or inferior races.’ Northerners did not want a slave empire in Cuba, but they also had no desire to see free Cubans as citizens of the American Republic.”<sup>100</sup> In his essay “Politics and Prejudice: The Free Soil Party and the Negro, 1849-1852,” Eric Foner explains this apparent contradiction in Free Soil ideals:

The party's leaders realized that in a society characterized by an all but universal belief in white supremacy, no political party could function effectively which included a call for equal rights in its national platform. In addition, the Free Soilers who favored equal suffrage and opposed racial discrimination, were themselves highly ambiguous in their attitude towards the Negro race. Almost all accepted the prevailing belief in the Negro's intellectual inferiority, and many were uneasy about the prospect of a permanent Negro population in their own states.<sup>101</sup>

Dana's position on Cuban annexation reflects a similar conflict involving race. At times, Dana subtly supports annexation because of the rich opportunities offered by Cuba, but never does he argue directly for such action. He can only write passively: "Their [Cuban's] future seems to be hanging in doubt, depending on the action of our government, which is thought to have a settled purpose to acquire the island."<sup>102</sup> The writer who sees both large profits and a mixed race of "inferior" black and Chinese workers, is himself ambivalent about potential annexation. As Dana's own Free Soil Party illustrates, when race is introduced into any debate in mid-nineteenth-century America, the results often reveal the imaginative limits of writers, politicians, and reading audiences.

Richard Henry Dana, Jr., was an obviously intelligent and well-traveled man, and he was clearly aware of the injustice that the Cuban plantation slave system perpetuated. Throughout his text are acknowledgements of these wrongs. He concedes: "Notwithstanding all we hear and know of the enervating influence of the climate, the white man, if not laborious himself, is the cause that labor is in others."<sup>103</sup> Dana also visits a slave auction and though visibly troubled, can only write of the slaves: "A kind of fixed hopelessness marked the faces of some, listlessness that of others, and others seemed anxious or disappointed."<sup>104</sup> The human angst here is obvious, but throughout *To Cuba and Back*, he decides not to attack this system and its oppressive activity throughout Cuba and the United States. As a writer, Dana was only part of the American cultural/colonial project, but his text plays a significant role in its support and continuation. Spurr claims of colonial discourse: "It is... a way of creating and responding to reality that is infinitely adaptable in its function of preserving the basic structures of power."<sup>105</sup> Dana's difficulty in challenging the Cuban system or positing any useful method of abolition has its roots in the power system in which he was writing. On this resource-laden island full of racially mixed people, the United States wanted desperately to assert its emerging colonial power for control. Ironically, this same "mixed" character of the island prevented such action, however, leaving the island in a state of limbo — a condition which was ultimately more comfortable for America, as it continued the economic benefits of this significant trading partner, and provided an unhurried retreat for Dana and his leisure set. Annexation would have forced the United

States to deal actively with the nature of slavery in the South and confront its own fears about racial mixing. In 1860, this type of analysis was eschewed in both the South and the North, and is therefore avoided by Dana in *To Cuba and Back*.

In his closing reflections on the island, Dana reasserts the mindset governing his narrative and attitude:

But the reflecting mind soon tires of the anecdotes of injustice, cruelty and licentiousness on the one hand, and of justice, kindness and mutual attachment, on the other. You know that all coexist; but in what proportion you can only conjecture. You know what slavery is, in its effect on both the parties to it. You seek to grapple with the problem itself. And, stating it fairly, it is this — Shall the industry of Cuba go on, or shall the island be abandoned to a state of nature?<sup>106</sup>

Both Dana and his American readers appear to have “tired” of discussions involving slavery, so he sums up the issue by simplistically polarizing the debate. As he prepares to board his steamer for return to America, he writes: “This leave-taking is strange process, and has strange effects. How suddenly a little of unnoticed good in what you leave behind comes out, and touches you, in a moment of tenderness! And how much of the evil and disagreeable seems to have disappeared.”<sup>107</sup> The elision here is important, as the plight of those slaves feeding the Cuban sugar machine have truly “disappeared” from Dana’s, and America’s, field of vision. What happens to the slaves and underclass of Cuba is much less important than Dana’s leaving the island refreshed and ready to continue his work in America. Though his narrative provides a detailed introduction to Cuba for many of his readers, he also portrays the island as place inferior to America, thereby maintaining a sense of American cultural hegemony. Moreover, the reader of *To Cuba and Back* can, along with Dana, avoid any serious consideration of the injustice of slavery both in Cuba, and more importantly, in antebellum America. Some twenty years earlier, in 1840, Dana wrote in *Two Years Before the Mast*: “It has been said that the greatest curse to each of the South Sea islands was the first man who discovered it; and everyone who knows anything of the history of our commerce in those parts knows how much truth there is in this.”<sup>108</sup> His concern and empathy towards the victims of colonialism is soon forgotten in Cuba, as the mixed racial component and his own connection to the America’s developing overseas commerce blinds him to the injustice on the island — revealing the problem race caused in the antebellum American consciousness. In the coming years, as America shifted its attention to the economically appealing Hawaiian Islands, these same contradictions would be articulated once again by Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard, and Jack London.

## NOTES

1. For a concise discussion of Dana's importance as a founder of this genre, see Haskell Springer, "Introduction," in *America and the Sea: A Literary History*, ed. Haskell Springer (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 5-6.
2. Dana left Harvard in 1834, sailing to California via Cape Horn. In 1836, he returned to Boston on the *Alert*, reentered Harvard, and completed his education.
3. John Bryant, Introduction to *Typee* by Herman Melville (New York: Penguin, 1996), xxvii.
4. See, for example, Bryce Conrad, "Richard Henry Dana, Jr., and *Two Years Before the Mast*: Strategies for Objectifying the Subjective Self," *Criticism* 29:3 (1987): 291-311; Douglas B. Hill, Jr., "Richard Henry Dana, Jr., and *Two Years Before the Mast*," *Criticism* 9 (1967): 312-325; Robert L. Gale, *Richard Henry Dana* (New York: Twayne, 1969).
5. Robert F. Lucid, ed., *The Journal of Richard Henry Dana, Jr.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 152.
6. See Gale, 81 and Charles Francis Adams, *Richard Henry Dana, a Biography* (1890; reprinted Gale Research Company, 1968), 172. (page references are to the 1968 edition). Gale notes that after Dana's return to Boston, *To Cuba and Back* was in print within two months.
7. Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), 10.
8. Gale, 146.
9. Dana, *Cuba*, 8.
10. Dana, *Cuba*, 12.
11. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 73. These discussions are full of valuable thoughts on assessing colonial authors of all nationalities. Here, I am following Spivak in using "subject" to refer to the dominant Western viewpoint and classification.
12. Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism," chap. in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 66.
13. Dana, *Cuba*, 16.
14. Dana, *Cuba*, 16.
15. *To Cuba and Back* is noticeably lacking in presentation of Spanish words or explanation of Spanish terms. Only when absolutely necessary—such as Dana's mention that an "ingenio" is a sugar plantation—does he present and translate foreign words. For a discussion of the colonizer's maintenance of Subject status, see Spivak, 73-76. Only through conscious denigration of the Object of colonial discourse can the Subject assert his power.
16. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 322. Though this work focuses on portrayal of the Other in contemporary visual media, their approach is relevant to literary analysis as well.
17. Dana, *Cuba*, 12.
18. Dana, *Cuba*, 20-21.

19. David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 9. Spurr focuses his attention on a very wide historical range, but his discussion of “literary journalism”—a practice he connects to “national policy and public opinion”—is particularly useful for analyzing the place of *To Cuba and Back* as it interacts with mid-nineteenth-century American culture.
20. Dana, *Cuba*, 45.
21. Dana, *Cuba*, 45.
22. Dana, *Cuba*, 45.
23. Dana, *Cuba*, 98.
24. Dana, *Cuba*, 98.
25. For detailed discussion of the role of the mulatto in nineteenth-century American writing, see Catherine Juanita Starke’s *Black Portraiture in American Fiction: Stock Characters, Archetypes, and Individuals* (New York: Basic Books, 1971); William J. Scheick’s *The Half Blood: A Cultural Symbol in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1979).
26. Chandra Mohanty “Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism” in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 18. Mohanty’s emphasis is on the subjugation of women by colonial powers, but her attention to issues of class and economics is relevant to Dana’s portrayal of Cuba.
27. Dana, *Cuba*, 44.
28. See Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990). Pérez explains that slavery was on the rise in Cuba during the nineteenth century. In 1792, there were eighty five thousand slaves on Cuba. By 1841, this number swelled to four hundred thirty six thousand. By the time of Dana’s visit in 1859, the number of slaves may be as high as seven hundred thousand (120).
29. Dana, *Cuba*, 46.
30. Dana, *Cuba*, 47.
31. Dana, *Cuba*, 47.
32. Dana, *Cuba*, 47-8.
33. Dana, *Cuba*, 48.
34. C. Harvey Gardiner, introduction to *To Cuba and Back*, by Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), ix.
35. Dana, *Cuba*, 50.
36. Dana, *Cuba*, 55-6.
37. Dana, *Cuba*, 56.
38. Dana, *Cuba*, 56.
39. Dana, *Cuba*, 56.
40. Dana, *Cuba*, 65.
41. Dana, *Cuba*, 66.
42. Gale, 80.
43. Dana, *Journal*, 353.



44. This bill was written by James Mason and became law in 1850. It required that alleged fugitive slaves found in the North be extradited to the South without a trail or writ of habeas corpus.
45. Dana, *Journal*, 412.
46. Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative* (New York: Signet, 1964), 109.
47. Dana, *Cuba*, 9.
48. Gale, 80.
49. Gardiner, xiv.
50. Richard H. Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 6.
51. See, for example, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Alcott's short story "My Contraband." Here, the sentimental mode is deployed for the purpose of offering social critique of slavery and attempting to effect change by appealing to Northern, primarily female, readers.
52. See Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (London: 1859, repr. 1968); Amelia Mathilda Murray, *Letters from the United States, Cuba, and Canada* (New York: 1857; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).
53. Trollope, 127.
54. Trollope, 129.
55. Trollope, 148.
56. Murray, 247.
57. Murray, 247.
58. Bhabha, "The Other Question," 66.
59. Mohanty, 17.
60. Dozens of early and mid-nineteenth century Cuban travel narratives were published in the United States. See, for example, John Stevens Cabot Abbott, *South and North; or Impressions Received During a Trip to Cuba and the South* (New York: Abbey and Abbott, 1860); William Henry Hurlbert, *Gan-Eden; or Pictures of Cuba* (Boston: Jewett, 1854); Richard Burleigh Kimball, *Cuba and the Cubans* (New York: Hueston, 1850); Nathaniel Parker Willis *Health Trip to the Tropics* (New York: Scribners, 1853). For a strong bibliography of nineteenth-century travel writing on Cuba, see Louis Pérez's bibliographic essay in his edition of Dimock's *Impressions of Cuba*.
61. Joseph Judson Dimock, *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: The Travel Diary of Joseph J. Dimock*, ed. Louis A. Pérez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1998), 12.
62. Dimock, 21.
63. Dimock, 45. See pages 43-46 for an account of the manufacture of sugar similar to the one provided by Dana.
64. Dimock, 97.
65. Bryant was editor of the *Evening Post* from 1829 until his death in 1878. Though the paper opposed expanding slavery into the Western territories, it also advocated free trade.
66. William Cullen Bryant, *The Letters of William Cullen Bryant*, Vol. III, ed. William Cullen Bryant II and Thomas G. Voss (New York: Fordham UP, 1981), 46. Voss

and Bryant II explain that here Bryant learned “of the thriving foreign slave trade which, nominally outlawed forty years earlier, had nevertheless brought nearly half a million Africans to the Western Hemisphere since 1840” (6).

67. Bryant, 46.
68. Dana, *Cuba*, 15.
69. A. Curtis Wilgus, introduction to Julia Ward Howe, *A Trip to Cuba* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860.; reprint New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), x. Wilgus notes that Howe devoted a great deal of her time to such issues as infant health, women’s suffrage and prison reform, and explains that Howe “was considered by many of her contemporaries as the greatest woman organizer of her day” (x).
70. Howe, 38-9.
71. Dana, *Cuba*, 15.
72. Howe, 220-21.
73. Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 124.
74. Howe, 216.
75. Wilgus, x.
76. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 12-13.
77. Pérez, “Introduction,” xi. Pérez also explains that this arrangement had much earlier roots. In 1762, because of Spain’s entrance into the Seven Years War between England and France, the British seized Havana from Spain. The result was increased trade between North America and Cuba (*Ties*, 4).
78. Pérez notes that the majority of planters, growers, farmers, and ranchers were Creoles. They held significant power on the island and wanted to maintain foreign markets, particularly in North America, but were worried about Spanish tariffs and taxes (*Ties*, 29).
79. Pérez, *Ties*, 10. See also Noel J. Kent, *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1983). Kent provides a useful discussion of sugar plantation structure on Cuba and the Hawaiian Islands.
80. Curtin notes that more slaves were actually landed in Brazil than in the United States. Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays on Atlantic History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 46. Incidentally, in 1888, Brazil became the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery.
81. Curtin, 73. For a thorough history of the rise of the slave plantation system in the Caribbean, see Chapter 6, “The Sugar Revolution and the Settlement of the Caribbean.” Here, Curtin shows the forces which shaped the Caribbean system and makes crucial ties to plantation development in the United States.
82. Dana, *Cuba*, 126.
83. Philip Sheldon Foner, *The Spanish-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895-1898* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 23.
84. Kent, 58.
85. Dana, *Dana*, 128.
86. Dana, *Cuba*, 129.

87. Harmannus Hoetink, *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 61-64. In this discussion of slavery and its development, Hoetink draws upon the ideas of ethnologist H. J. Nieboer on slavery as an economic system.
88. Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," chap. in *The Location of Culture*, 111.
89. Dana, *Cuba*, 121.
90. Dana, *Cuba*, 122.
91. Dana, *Cuba*, 126.
92. Reginald Horsman *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 6. Horsman provides an interesting discussion of American eradication of the Indians at home and pursuit of colonial interests abroad. Race, he argues, is a driving force behind the American concept of "manifest destiny." See also Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985). Hietala argues of United States policy makers in the mid-nineteenth century: "Their uneasiness about race relations, modernization, population growth, antislavery agitation, and international competition for colonies and trade led them to embrace territorial and commercial expansion as the best means of protecting the political and economic viability of the United States from dangers at home and abroad" (xi).
93. Qtd. in Pérez, *Ties*, 67.
94. Gardiner, viii.
95. Pérez, *Ties*, xiii.
96. Trollope, 137.
97. Perez, *Ties*, 34. See also Eric Foner, "Politics and Prejudice: The Free Soil Party and the Negro, 1849-1952," *The Journal of Negro History* 50:4 (October 1965). Foner also notes that both Peninsulares (those born in Spain) and Creoles opposed Spain's attempts to abolish slavery. Interest in annexation was initiated when Spain suggested abolition as a possibility.
98. Dana, *Cuba*, 133.
99. Gardiner, x.
100. Qtd. in Horsman, 282. Over forty years later, American Arthur Curtis James would write of Hawaiian annexation: "the mixed character of the population is a real drawback" (760). He wrote of Cuba at the same time: "If Cuba were populated by native Caribbeans, and virtually owned and governed by our own people, there would be no question as to its desirability, but it is thickly settled by a mixture of the Negro with the scum of a decayed Latin race" (760). Arthur Curtis James, "Advantages of Hawaiian Annexation" *North American Review* 165 (December 1897), 758-60.
101. Foner attempts to uncover why the issue of Negro rights was avoided in the national platform of the Free Soil Party. In his analysis, he finds party emphasis on the "poor whites" in slave areas and concerns of Northern workers who feared losing their jobs to emancipated slaves as underpinning this position. Ultimately, however, Foner explains that racism was at the heart of many of these arguments (240).

102. Dana, *Cuba*, 33.
103. Dana, *Cuba*, 81.
104. Dana, *Cuba*, 107.
105. Spurr, 11.
106. Dana, *Cuba*, 127.
107. Dana, *Cuba*, 125.
108. Dana, *Two Years*, 231.

## Chapter Three

# “The Kings of the Sandwich Islands”: Mark Twain’s *Letters from Hawaii* and Postbellum American Imperialism

In April 1865, after four years of hostilities, the American Civil War came to an end at Appomattox Courthouse. With over 250,000 Confederate and more than 360,000 Union soldiers and civilians dead, the war had taken an enormous physical and psychological toll on the young nation.<sup>1</sup> Entire areas of the South lay decimated, and millions of dollars had been spent by both sides to support their campaigns. As Historian Shelby Foote succinctly states: “Few wars... had been so proportionately expensive, either in money or in blood.”<sup>2</sup> The close of the war brought attendant cultural difficulties as well. Southern blacks were now ostensibly free to pursue life outside the confines of forced plantation labor, and the cessation of hostilities promised increased movement between the North and South. But as the hardships of Reconstruction showed, reuniting a torn nation still grappling with issues of slavery, expansion, and migration was a daunting task that would take many years simply to understand, let alone solve. Postbellum America was engaged in a continual struggle to craft a political, social, and economic reality that was both separate from Europe and inclusive of the North and the South. Part of this national identity emerged after the country was reunified, for as Foote argues: “Whatever else the veterans [both in the North and the South] brought or failed to bring home with them... they had acquired a sense of nationhood, or nationality.”<sup>3</sup> Even with a developing notion of what constituted America on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, the country nonetheless found itself in continued hard economic times as it recovered from the debt of the war and strained to find a place for black Americans.<sup>4</sup> Though the war was over, preservation of the Union did not necessarily translate into a shared nationwide sense of equality or cultural purpose.

Against this backdrop of racial, cultural, and political turmoil in America, a young American writer known for a few sketches and newspaper pieces published in the newly established states of Nevada and California made plans for a trip outside the United States in early 1866. For Samuel Clemens, the Civil War had been a compelling event, but one that had directly effected him only tangentially. A few months after the start of the War, in July 1861, Clemens had made the nineteen-day stage journey from St. Louis to Carson City. In Nevada and California, he began gaining notoriety as an essayist and newspaper reporter, spending time in Carson City, Sacramento, and San Francisco — at the time, all embodiments of the unbridled American frontier. But as 1866 dawned, the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad was only three years away, and with this transportation link would come reconsideration of the borderland status afforded California and Nevada. Though he was recognized already in many areas of the United States for his comical California story “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” debt, disillusionment, and this shifting frontier drove Clemens to seek a new location for his literary ambitions.<sup>5</sup> A travel opportunity in 1866 proved to be a pivotal event for this emerging writer who would come to be known worldwide as Mark Twain. On January 13, 1866, the steamer *Ajax* initiated service between San Francisco and Honolulu, Sandwich Islands — a route that dramatically reduced travel time from twenty-one to ten days each way and raised American awareness of these Pacific islands. Because of the popularity of “Jumping Frog,” Samuel Clemens was one of fifty-two San Franciscans invited on the ship’s maiden voyage. Though he was unable to embark on the inaugural sailing, the *Ajax* invitation piqued Clemens’ interest in traveling to Hawaii as a correspondent so that he could eventually assemble a travel book about the islands.<sup>6</sup> His San Francisco acquaintance, poet Charles Warren Stoddard, had spoken very highly of his visits to the islands as well, further arousing Clemens’ curiosity. All that remained was a sponsoring newspaper, and Clemens found one in the successful *Sacramento Union*, which agreed to pay him for a series of travel letters describing life on the Sandwich Islands and cover his travel expenses. The assignment was a coup. In 1866, the *Union* was the “most powerful and popular newspaper on the West Coast” and Twain’s letters appeared both in daily and weekly editions.<sup>7</sup> Andrew Hoffman explains the *Union*’s motivation: “The development of steamer traffic to the islands and the rapid expansion of the sugar industry there made them seem like the next American frontier, and interest in the Pacific kingdom ran high.”<sup>8</sup> The offer was simply too good to pass up, and on March 7, 1866, Samuel Clemens sailed aboard the steamship *Ajax* for Honolulu.

With the approaching “closure” of the Western frontier, perhaps this voyage to Hawaii offered Clemens the chance to continue exploring the unknown, for as Haskell Springer asserts: “the later absence of a West [for America] left only the

sea.”<sup>9</sup> Whatever his personal motivation, the twenty-five letters Clemens sent back to California under his pen name Mark Twain also played a significant role in the continuing exploration of America’s internal and external identity. Here, in a location that was both literally and conceptually foreign, America could move forward towards the type of unity suggested, but not provided, at the end of the Civil War. As Reconstruction floundered in the South among distrust, racism, and greed, America needed a site where it could explore and act out its nationhood away from recurring squabbles. The Sandwich Islands were such an imaginative and geographical space. Amy Kaplan argues that “the role of empire has been... ignored in the study of American culture,”<sup>10</sup> and Hawaii provided America with “unclaimed” foreign ground — a potential empire — on which to explore both its burgeoning imperial and economic desires. Itself an incipient economic power, America needed territories for commercial expansion.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, while Hawaii promised enormous profit and trade opportunities, it simultaneously offered America a way to explore its still unsettled racial disputes by contemplating Kanakas and Coolies as its labor force. Within this cultural fray, the literary persona of the man who would become America’s best-known and most celebrated writer also found an outlet for development. Without a neutral and generally agreed upon place of American expansion for Samuel Clemens to test and form his new literary self, the writer we know as Mark Twain might not have emerged. It is for these interconnected reasons that Twain’s *Letters from Hawaii* deserves detailed critical and cultural analysis.<sup>12</sup> In these letters, Twain begins cultivating the glib humor that would become an indispensable part of his literary voice, which was, according to Walter Blair, “a summary of nineteenth-century native American humor.”<sup>13</sup> But Twain’s deployment of humor does not, as one would expect, permeate his letters. Instead, because of the need to write accurate, descriptive prose for potential investors in California — men who were concerned primarily with facts and figures — Twain was cautious in his blending of satire and exposition. Moreover, because Twain’s humor is limited and sparsely scattered in his Hawaii letters, comic instances reveal ways in which he deploys his developing wit to camouflage imperial contradictions raised in the text. In this tropical environment, Mark Twain himself was being “fashioned” for American readers in each letter, and it is through the lens of postbellum American culture that Twain’s reflections on the islands and, indirectly, on himself, emerge.

On March 18, 1866, Twain posted the first of twenty-five letters describing his Hawaiian travel experiences.<sup>14</sup> Though sent from Honolulu, this letter is primarily set aboard the *Ajax*, focusing on the details of his ocean journey and the time spent in harbor. Beginning his letters with a humorous approach to his travel descriptions, Twain explains: “We arrived here today at noon... There are a good many mosquitoes around tonight and they are rather troublesome; but it is a source of unalloyed

satisfaction to me to know that the two millions I sat down on a minute ago will never sing again.”<sup>15</sup> One of the nuisances of life in the tropics is the presence of mosquitoes, and since he was always straightforward in his “journalistic” letters, Twain refuses to hide the realities of island life. But in choosing to write sarcastically about the “two million” mosquitoes, he is able to lighten the subject for his readers by both suggesting the difficulties of tropical life, and quickly dismissing the annoyance. To continue this humorous illustration of the irritation caused by pests, Twain introduces his fictitious traveling companion, Mr. Brown.<sup>16</sup> Twain describes his fellow American traveler as a man “who has no better manners than to read over one’s shoulders” while he writes. In Letter 4, dated March 1866, Twain uses Brown to expound humorously on his mosquito description. While Twain is writing, Brown bluntly advises him: “‘put it all down now that you’ve begun; just say, ‘And more ‘santipedes,’ and cockroaches, and fleas, and lizards, and red ants, and scorpions, and spiders, and mosquitoes.’”<sup>17</sup> Though Twain responds: “‘But, Mr. Brown, these are trifles... these are the mere’”; Brown continues: “‘Mere — your grandmother!... You look at them raw splotches all over my face — all over my arms — all over my body! Mosquito bites! Don’t tell me about mere things!’”<sup>18</sup> Closing the letter, Twain sums up his opinion of Brown: “I don’t like to be interrupted when I am writing — especially by Brown, who is one of those men who always looks at the unpleasant side of everything, and I seldom do.”<sup>19</sup> Don Florence argues that the use of Brown is “an experiment in dualism” where Brown is the realist and Twain the romantic, and claims that through Brown, Twain is able to voice “many earthy and controversial views, setting up a constant conflict between gentleman Twain and barbarian Brown.”<sup>20</sup> In addition, Twain is firmly ensconced in an American tradition of “yarn humor,” where “the teller is an actor whose function it is to give the illusion of standing aside while the story unfolds itself.”<sup>21</sup> By creating the comic persona of Mr. Brown, Twain finds an effective means for constructing engaging but informative dialogue that allows him to maintain the role of genteel traveler while conceding complaints about the unpleasant aspects of imperial endeavors to Brown. Such a construction of both Mr. Brown and Mark Twain is important, since it exposes the conflict between satire and imperialism Clemens faced. Though Twain would develop over the years as a vibrant American humorist, such tactics were less than palatable for practically minded American business readers — an audience for the letters as they appeared in the *Union*. Clemens, therefore, creates fictitious dialogue that permits humor without compromising Twain’s colonial presentation of the islands for his readers.

Twain’s comedic tactics continue as he looks backward to describe his steamship journey from California to Hawaii. Throughout this letter, Twain expresses fairly typical impressions of a man for whom the ocean was a new, unfamiliar, and unsettling expanse. Reflecting on the “turbulent sea,” he writes: “I found twen-



ty-two passengers, leaning over the bulwarks vomiting"; and grumbles: "The sea was rough for several days and nights, and the vessel rolled and pitched heavily."<sup>22</sup> Of course, stormy waters and seasickness were frequent consequences of sea travel, but Twain elects to diminish these imperial inconveniences by presenting the underlying humor of this situation. He closes his first letter by satirically chiding Vasco Nuñez de Balboa for naming this ocean the "Pacific":

You can take that four-days of your infamous 'Pacific,' Mr. Balboa, and digest it, and you may consider it pretty well for your reputation in California that we had pretty fair weather the balance of the voyage. If we hadn't, I would have given you a blast in this letter that would have made your old dry bones rattle in your coffin — you shameless old foreign humbug!<sup>23</sup>

Twain continues these lamentations on sea travel in his second letter, dated March 19: "From all I can discover, if this foreign person had named this ocean the 'Four Months Pacific,' he would have come nearer the mark."<sup>24</sup> The hope for successful completion of a dangerous sea journey has been a hallmark of American sea narratives from John Winthrop to Richard Henry Dana and beyond. Though Twain did not have to face the perils of the North Atlantic or the difficult trip around Cape Horn, he nonetheless endured a tumultuous voyage.<sup>25</sup> But Twain's Sandwich Islands visit was less about "getting there," as it was about promoting the islands and the new steamer service for American readers. Therefore, by using humor to describe the difficulties of his voyage, Twain is able to displace the concerns of sea-wary American travelers, and focus instead on his promotional intent in composing the letters. Reference to this underlying imperialistic vein in his journalism appears shortly hereafter in his second letter, as Twain adopts the role of advocate for the commercial interests of his California sponsors.<sup>26</sup> In a section entitled "A Word to the Commercially Wise," he explains of Honolulu and San Francisco: "a trade is building up between the two ports... and only steamers can extend and develop this and conduct it successfully."<sup>27</sup> Emphasizing their reduction of travel time between the growing ports and praising the convenience of expanded year-round service, Twain then links humor and advocacy. In comically denouncing Balboa, Twain is able to both lighten American fears about the long journey — since the seas became calm for the latter part of Twain's voyage — and assert American disdain for Europe and the past by calling Balboa a "shameless old foreign humbug." Florence explains: "By using the creative quirkiness of humor, [Twain] links moods, events, and people in fresh and unexpected ways, presenting a world that he wants or at least can control."<sup>28</sup> In this novel "critique" of Balboa and the Pacific, Twain reveals the comic voice that would help define him for his readers while he simultaneously furthers the promotional aims demanded by his sponsoring newspaper.

Aside from simply telling his tale of sea travel and advertising steamer service to Hawaii, Twain has a deeper motive for making the journey seem palatable to his readers — a motive strongly tied to American aims in the Pacific. Temporarily discarding his humorous approach, Twain becomes less jocular when he explicates American imperial desires: “The main argument in favor of a line of fast steamers is [that]... [t]hey would soon populate the islands with Americans, and loosen that French and English grip which is gradually closing around them.”<sup>29</sup> The yearning to “populate the islands with Americans” is a direct result of the multiple Western forces influencing Hawaii, and only an increased American presence would counteract French and English power. The reasons for Twain’s explicit imperialist call to arms were fairly obvious, as Rob Wilson explains: “California materialized into a coastal center of capitalist accumulation and U.S. Pacific Rim presence with the discovery of gold in 1848 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.”<sup>30</sup> Mark Twain was very much a part of this hegemonic ascent of California and the West as he began his career on the cusp of a mining boom. It is only natural, then, that he should become a voice for the continuation of this expansion westward into the Pacific. Reginald Horsman elaborates on the American mindset: “typical of the 1850s was the belief that commercial penetration and population growth were the keys to future American relations with the rest of the world.”<sup>31</sup> In describing his Pacific journey, Twain had previously used humor to assuage American concerns and fears about the voyage. In his more transparent tracts for steamship service, however, Twain abandons his comic voice in favor of a much more pedantic tone. Unlike previous American writers who had celebrated the sea voyage itself as an initiation or escape from the troubles of life on land — recall Melville’s Ishmael exerting that “meditation and water are wedded for ever” — Twain’s purpose for writing about the sea is patently commercial, and the lively comic is subverted by the plodding capitalist.

Why would Mark Twain, who held literary aspirations, devote so much of his early Hawaii letters to an uncharacteristically dry exposition on the importance of steamer service and American trade? The answer is complex and recalls Amy Kaplan’s insistence that we must address “the absence of culture from the history of United States imperialism.”<sup>32</sup> At the time of Twain’s visit in 1866, the United States was working through the painful aftermath of the Civil War. One significant problem was uniting the country, and economics was an obvious means of bringing North and South together. The entire nation was devastated by the war, and though the South was most affected, the North had accumulated significant debt as well. Therefore, the need for increased international trade would be viewed as essential on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, while a newly united country struggled towards economic recovery. But in advocating commercial proliferation, Twain is not a unique seafarer. John Sampson explains: “In the [sea] accounts

of many American men... advancements in religions, society, and science were at most secondary to the advancement of commerce. The prospect of material gain lead many to sea — and to narrate their experiences on their return.”<sup>33</sup> Exclusive to Twain’s emphasis on “material gain” is his historical moment and what Richard Brodhead calls “literature’s working conditions.”<sup>34</sup> As a writer eager to craft a name for himself, broadcasting the bright economic possibilities of Hawaii to a receptive audience was one way to attract attention. Part of Twain’s method for self-promotion involved deferring consideration of controversial aspects of colonialism by foregrounding humor — the literary device by which he had gained a reputation in California. Hoffman argues that after the success of his witty “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” Clemens “still didn’t know exactly who Mark Twain was or what he would bring to the worlds Sam had experienced, but Mark Twain was a valuable commodity now.”<sup>35</sup> Ever since the name “Mark Twain” had appeared in January 1863 in letters reporting on the Nevada legislature for the *Virginia City Union*, this *nom de plume* was signed on all of Samuel Clemens’ work.<sup>36</sup> Legislative reports and “local color” stories were not enough to establish a substantial national reputation, however. Twain needed a common ground through which he could reach the bulk of American readers, and he found it in Hawaii. Arguing for commercial expansion into the Pacific, he discovered a colonial stance upon which most of his audience could agree, and, as Shelley Fishkin elaborates: “Mark Twain became the voice of the new land, the leading translator of what and who the ‘American’ was — and, to a large extent, is.”<sup>37</sup> Clearly, the “voice” postbellum America sought was one that could foreground opportunities for economic growth at home and abroad. As a result, his characteristic humor is often subordinated to commercial ties to his California sponsors, exposing contradictions in the development of Mark Twain the writer, and America the imperial power.

Twain’s complex relation to America’s developing interest in the Hawaiian Islands is most vividly expressed in his discussion of Hawaiian sugar plantations. As Dana has shown in *To Cuba and Back*, sugar grown in tropical climates is of great interest both to curious readers and enterprising capitalists alike. Twain had earlier argued for colonization of the Hawaiian Islands by Americans, and the motives for these urgings come fully to light in his plantation letters. Horsman clarifies: “Externally, American pressure on adjacent territories was justified by the argument that only the American Anglo-Saxons could bring the political and economic changes that would make possible unlimited world progress.”<sup>38</sup> Twain’s discussion of the arable land in Kona suggests such Americanized agricultural transformations. He writes: “In Central Kona there is but little idle cane land now, but there is a good deal in North and South Kona.... It is owned by common natives... [who] make no use of it whatsoever, and yet, here lately, they seem disin-

clined to either lease or sell it.<sup>39</sup> Twain's message here is twofold. First, he wishes to draw readers' consideration to the many acres of "unoccupied" land — land just waiting for sugar cultivation. Second, by reinforcing the importance of Anglo-Saxon economic change, he implies that Americans, with their knack for business, must take possession of this land so that it may be used properly. The natives' failure to cultivate this land is, in the eyes of the colonizer, a sign of their unfitness for management of their own capital. In Letter 23, a description of all aspects of the sugar industry on the islands, he even goes as far as to predict: "When all the cane lands in the Islands are under full cultivation, they will produce over 250,000,000 pounds of sugar annually."<sup>40</sup> For visionary capitalists in America, such economic promise would have been an enormous catalyst to explore investment in the islands.<sup>41</sup> Though Twain's description of the Hawaiian sugar plantations and their potential for significant profit were strong drives for his writing, his letters also exhibit deeper cultural motivations which emerged in postbellum America.

With Reconstruction beginning in the South, Twain's Hawaii letters spoke to a nation struggling with complex questions about the racial composition of its late-nineteenth-century labor pool. Amy Kaplan contextualizes Twain's cultural milieu:

Ultimately Twain finds in Hawaii not a new open frontier, but an uncanny recapitulation of what would later become the Old South. In the culture of the sugar plantation, he found striking, if unstated parallels between the colonized setting of Hawaii and the slaveholding South. Traveling in the immediate after-math of the Civil War, Twain brought to Hawaii unspoken questions and assumptions about slavery, emancipation, and race relations at home, which he found refracted back to him in a colonial context.<sup>42</sup>

Many of the parallels between the labor systems of the South and Hawaii are visible in Letter 23 where Twain foregrounds comparisons between Louisiana and Hawaii. Though Emancipation has already taken place and the Civil War is over, Twain continues to refer to the slavery system of the Old South as a metaphorical reference point. Discussing plantation labor, he writes: "In the Islands... mills and stock cost about the same as in Louisiana. The hire of each laborer is \$100 a year — just about what it used to cost to board and clothe and doctor a Negro — but there is no original outlay of \$500 to \$1000 for the purchase of the laborer."<sup>43</sup> Though Twain does acknowledge Emancipation by the past tense "used," he speaks of the costs themselves in the present tense. One reason for this deferment to the language of slavery is to provide American businessmen with a convenient measure of the cost of sugar production. Since most American sugar production occurred in Louisiana, it was a reliable gauge of the increased profitability to be

found in the Sandwich Islands. But Twain's language also calls attention to slavery as a persistent touchstone for Americans. In this "recapitulation" of the Old South, Twain finds much to unify his readers. For an audience seeking a way to replace slavery as a labor and cultural system, Hawaii functions as a convenient foreign alternative. Moreover, as a means of bringing together a divided nation, a resuscitation of plantation society on the Hawaiian Islands allows America to assuage its own cultural guilt over slavery without having to address deeper issues and contradictions surrounding racial equality. On this cultural level, "Hawaii promises to replace the economic loss of slavery, [and] it may also duplicate and recover its memorial and cultural value."<sup>44</sup>

Clarifying the labor arrangements on sugar plantations, Twain forges even wider-ranging connections between the slave system at home and the potential American use of exploitable labor for commercial gain. In a section simply titled "Labor," Twain elucidates the basic operation of a sugar plantation for his readers. Inexpensive Kanaka labor is offered here as a viable labor source, but Twain provides a caveat, explaining: "day by day the Kanaka race is passing away. Cheap labor had to be procured by some means or other, and so the Government sends to China for coolies and farms them out to the planters at \$5 a month each for five years."<sup>45</sup> Consistent with his focus on Hawaiian commerce and not the Hawaiian people, Twain avoids any further dialogue on or lamentation of the dying Kanaka race — a decline brought on primarily by Westerners carrying disease to the islands. Instead, Twain offers Coolies as a solution to a disconcerting labor problem. His narrative confidently tells the Americans he hopes will "populate the islands" not to worry; cheap labor will always be available. Since this abundant workforce is racially different from white Americans, Twain also explores their presence through particularly racialized stereotypes. Dana Nelson argues that "race" can be seen "as an active viable metaphor that serves to inscribe and naturalize (as well as subvert) power relationships being constantly reproduced in cultural texts as well as in human relationships."<sup>46</sup> Twain deploys this metaphorical use of race as he extols the benefits of Coolie labor. He asserts: "They are steady, industrious workers when properly watched"; and continues "[s]ome of the women are being educated as house servants, and I observe that they do not put on airs, and 'sass' their masters and mistresses."<sup>47</sup> Central to the possibility of using Coolie laborers is their conflation with slaves in the South. Twain draws on persistent stereotypes that suggest a Coolie desires work, but requires white supervision for truly constructive labor to take place. Twain's dilemma and authorial ploy are expressed by Brian Collins: "The Civil War had established that all men should be 'free' to dispose of their own labor whether they be blacks in the South or savages of new territories like Hawaii,... [but that] multiracial body-politic... was something few white Americans were prepared to accept."<sup>48</sup> This contradiction in American

culture that championed freedom on one hand while enforcing segregation on the other was culturally rectified through imperialism. Collins argues that “abroad, by pursuing ‘commercial’ rather than territorial expansion, Americans were able to convince themselves they bore no direct responsibility for the political fate of the savages.”<sup>49</sup> By conscripting cheap and ultimately Othered Chinese labor, Twain contends, the staggering productivity of sugar plantations in Hawaii will continue, American investment will safely escalate, and troubling questions at home can be comfortably deferred.

In seeking to unify postbellum America and create a national reputation, Mark Twain would also look backwards from Hawaii to the origins of his own literary career on the American mainland as a source of literary capital. With slavery abolished, all of America, not just capitalists interested in Hawaii, needed economical and subordinate labor. As a solution to this dilemma, Twain considers Coolies and California, rationalizing in the rare second person for his readers: “You will have coolie labor in California some day. It cheapens no labor of men’s hands save the hardest and most exhausting drudgery — drudgery which all white men abhor and are glad to escape from.”<sup>50</sup> In this highly racialized discourse, Twain is able to suggest subjugation of those viewed almost universally by white Americans as lesser peoples without reopening the debate over slavery; Moral concerns about America’s past could be put aside by reasserting the white position as Subject among Object peoples. Twain continues by proclaiming that as long as employers use “white men to oversee them, . . . [coolies are] the cheapest, the best, and most quiet, peaceable, and faithful labor.”<sup>51</sup> Such rhetoric echoes the familiar obedient slave/concerned overseer trope employed by apologists for the Old South. However, Twain’s anachronistic prose jibes comfortably with his more modern motives. Wilson argues that for “the sugar plantation owners of Hawai’i and the textile mill and railroad owners of California, ‘Asia’ becomes the source of a secret treasure — cheap Chinese labor — used to generate capitalist wealth.”<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, Twain cleverly unites Northern capital with the Southern plantation system in the national language of profit. Linked by their economic exploitation of Africans before the Civil War, the North, South, and eventually, the West, are “reunited” by Twain’s rhetorical deployment of the language of imperialism, colonial Othering, and race. Twain’s characteristic humor is absent from these arguments because he found little to satirize on the plantations, and because the economic benefit they would provide was a serious subject for his capitalist readers.

Though humor does not appear in his business-like plantation discussions, Twain’s comic voice does find creative space in discussions of other areas of Hawaiian culture. Touring Oahu on horseback with a group of fellow American travelers, the tourists make a startling discovery. Twain writes in Letter 7: “Gaily

laughing and talking, the party galloped on... [to] an old battleground. All around everywhere, not three feet apart, the bleached bones of men gleamed white in the moonlight. We picked up a lot of them for mementoes."<sup>53</sup> After clearly exhibiting a lack of respect for the ancient bones, Twain quickly turns to humor as a means of diffusing the situation. He records the words that "fell from the lips of the ladies" in their group: "Mr. Brown will you please hold some of my bones for me a minute?... Mr. Smith, you have got some of my bones; and you have got one, too, Mr. Jones; and you have got my spine, Mr. Twain. Now don't any of you gentlemen get my bones all mixed up with yours."<sup>54</sup> Constance Rourke has argued of Twain's humor: "His stories were oral and histrionic; manner was everything"; while Neider notes: "For Mark Twain, the special charm of the humorous story is that it is projected, dramatized."<sup>55</sup> This story of disturbed Kanaka bones illustrates the "histrionic" quality of Twain's humor since the anecdote relies on the visual image of bones being transported and mixed up. But Twain realizes the danger of basing his humor on skeletons of Kanaka warriors, so he speaks apologetically to his readers: "These remarks look very irreverent on paper, but they did not sound so, being used merely in a business way. I did not think it was just right to carry off these bones, but we did it anyhow."<sup>56</sup> Here, Twain uses humor as "a liberating and volatilizing power, a comic impulse that recasts experience"<sup>57</sup> in order to mask his imperialist message. American intervention on the islands may, in fact, reduce many natives to "bones," but this is not what his readers or investors wish to be told. Instead, Twain consciously shifts the attention away from his party, concluding the anecdote by castigating statesmen and missionaries: "I say shame upon you, that... you have not taught [Hawaiians] respect for the dead. Your work is incomplete."<sup>58</sup> By blending humor with social commentary, Twain can elicit a collective laugh from his readers while simultaneously making the subtle claim that the work of "civilization" must be continued by missionaries, and more effectively, capitalists on the islands. Of course, America should be the force behind this continued colonial intervention; These Others require assistance so they may learn respect for the dead that only "civilized" Westerners can provide. Moreover, this appropriation of the Kanaka bodies can be casually enacted because of their place in a Western racial hierarchy — one can imagine no such flippant treatment of a Revolutionary War battlefield, for example. In this bone-collecting passage, then, comedy and colony are conjoined to produce a piece that is both farcical and propagandistic for Twain's American readers. At the same time, the dual voice represented by Twain and Brown makes one of its last extended appearances in the bone-collecting passage as a more confident Samuel Clemens combined the realist and the romantic into the coherent satirical voice of Mark Twain.

While the national ascent of Mark Twain through his Hawaii letters relied upon his often comic articulation of American postbellum concerns through the

lens of colonial economic expansion, his reputation also benefited greatly from simply being in Hawaii at the right time. One key event during his stay on the islands may have allowed Twain's name recognition and career to catapult further than even he could have engineered. On January 15, 1866, the clipper ship *Hornet* left New York bound for the West coast with a general cargo. After the ship was spotted by an Australian ship rounding Cape Horn in April, the *Hornet* was not heard from again for forty-three days, until a number of its surviving crew arrived at Hawaii in a longboat on June 15<sup>th</sup> while Twain was on the islands. Their story is a tragic one. After an accident in the ship's hold, the *Hornet* caught fire in the Pacific. Escaping in three lifeboats, all thirty-one of the crew and passengers were saved while the ship burned and sank, but their rations were sparse — amounting to only sixteen gallons of water, some bread, salt pork, ham, butter, and brandy. During this time, the men endured harsh tropical conditions while their stores of food and water were exhausted. In order to increase their odds of rescue, the three initial boats split on the eighteenth day. The account of these days spent on the open ocean comes from the third mate of the surviving boat, who kept a log of the boat's activity. Twain exclaims: "What these men suffered... no mortal man may hope to describe. Their stomachs and intestines felt to the grasp like a couple of small tough balls, and the gnawing hunger pains and the dreadful thirst that was consuming them in those burning latitudes became almost insupportable."<sup>59</sup> Though the circumstances of the disaster are indeed tragic, the effect of this particular letter on Twain's career is immeasurable. Though his previous letters from the islands had been published in the *Union* and were widely circulated in California, the *Hornet* letter reached a much broader audience, as "[t]he front-page story was the first full report of the disaster to reach the U.S. and was widely reprinted."<sup>60</sup> Out of this narrative of adventure, human suffering, fate, luck, and rescue, Twain wove a tale that would land on the front page of national newspapers. If Mark Twain the Westerner was not yet known to Eastern readers yet, he certainly was now, and he owed this instant notoriety to his own fortuitous presence in Hawaii, resting near the sailor's hospital with saddle boils when the *Hornet* survivors arrived.<sup>61</sup> Such ability to combine circumstances and creativity is what Hoffman praises as a key element of Clemens "inspired ad hoc invention of fame."<sup>62</sup> Even Twain himself realized his luck in being first to report about the *Hornet* tragedy and rescue. In his 1899 essay, "My Debut as a Literary Person," Twain reflected: "The interest of this story is unquenchable; it is the sort that time cannot decay... for by some subtle law all tragic human experiences gain in pathos by the perspective of time."<sup>63</sup>

As a piece of sensational front-page news, the story of the *Hornet* was indeed an example of striking and timely journalism. The account may also be read metaphorically, however, as part of postbellum culture, for the details of the story



recall Melville's *Typee* in the references to the potential for the Westerner's great unspoken fear: cannibalism. My assertion has been that in *Typee*, Tommo flees the Marquesas because of a fear of becoming the racial Other, not the real threat of cannibalism as he claims. For Melville, cannibalism was a convenient literary and cultural device which would elicit a predictable response from his readers. Twain, too, draws strongly upon this social fear of cannibalism. In his story, Twain discusses the potential for cannibalism aboard the *Hornet* survivor's boat as provisions ran out:

The men seem to have thought in their own minds of the shipwrecked mariner's last dreadful resort — cannibalism; but they do not appear to have conversed about it. They only thought of the casting of lots and killing one of their number as a possibility; but even when they were eating rags and bone and boots and shell and hard oak wood, they seem to have still had a notion that it was remote.<sup>64</sup>

Certainly, the desperate survivors may have considered cannibalism as their situation grew dim, but they did not, according to what the survivors said and wrote, actually voice these feelings. Eager to add dramatic impact to narrative, however, Twain, uses deceptive language to suggest just such an anthropophagic possibility. He writes that the men "seem to have thought" about cannibalism and "thought of... killing one of their number." Never do the men overtly state such intent, though, and it appears that Twain deploys cannibalism partly for its sensational value. But cannibalism may serve another cultural role in Twain's letter as a trope for the pull between civilization and savagery. Collins argues that "Cannibalism... was a principal synecdoche for savagery; the tale as a whole, in turn, unfolds as an allegory for the conflict between civilization and savagism."<sup>65</sup> In other letters, Twain often refers to the "heathen" rites of the pre-civilized Hawaiians, and we can assume that cannibalism is included in this indictment. But Americans concerned about settling Hawaii need not worry about becoming heathen, cannibalistic Others, he states assuredly via the *Hornet* story. Even under duress in this unforgiving climate, Twain promises that Westerners will never succumb to "savagery," as the proper behavior of the *Hornet* crew guarantees. Colonizing Hawaii for its economic promise is acceptable, then, for, as Collins explains, "Twain's parable assures us that the civilized, with their republican ways, will stay civilized."<sup>66</sup> Hawaii, Twain tells his readers, is an innocent location for continued Western settlement, not a deleterious location harboring the potential for moral decay and corruption.

With Hawaii established as a desirable island paradise, Twain's letters turn even more towards imperialism. He was not, however, the first to utter such an expansionist position. Discussing the possibility of seizing the islands in 1845, John

O'Sullivan coined the term "manifest destiny," and according to Thomas Hietala: "he provided Americans then and since with an invaluable legitimizing myth of empire."<sup>67</sup> One reason why Twain and the United States could even consider territorial control and outright annexation of the Hawaiian Islands was the racial make-up of the natives. Darker than Euro-Americans, the Polynesians who populated the islands were an easy and convenient target for colonial racial stereotypes. Of course, racial stereotyping and colonial subjugation are hardly unusual activities for Western powers. Chandra Mohanty deems such behavior "the visible racialized masculinity of nineteenth and early twentieth-century territorialist imperialism."<sup>68</sup> But the particular cultural moment of Twain's letters makes matters of race in Hawaii even more pressing, because "[t]he ideology of expansion promises that binary social divisions and conflicts at home can be resolved by expanding into available open spaces at the periphery of the nation."<sup>69</sup> These "binary social divisions" might be articulated, in one sense, by racial tension in America. One group of enslaved citizens now found themselves emancipated, and white Americans were now forced to confront their own racial labels. Twain highlights these stereotypes as a cultural trope throughout his letters. In an early letter, he humorously warns his adventurous readers who might consider horseback riding on the islands: "In hiring a horse from a Kanaka, you must have all your eyes about you, because you can rest satisfied that you are dealing with as shrewd a rascal as ever patronized a penitentiary."<sup>70</sup> Here, Twain draws upon stereotypes of the Other as a shiftless and untrustworthy convict. He further claims that a Kanaka will "hire you a fine-looking horse at night," only to replace it with a broken-down horse "in the morning and contend that it is the same animal." Twain continues: "If you raise a row, he will get out by saying it was not himself who made the bargain with you, but his brother, 'who went out in the country this morning.' They always have a 'brother' to shift the responsibility upon."<sup>71</sup> This and other pieces of "advice" are meant to show Twain's readers that "the Kanaka horse jockey is fertile in invention and elastic in conscience."<sup>72</sup> Granted, this is not the most polished of Mark Twain's comedy, but as Blair notes of Twain's early humor: "only occasional passages hinted at his real abilities."<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Paine writes of such developing wit: "The Hawaiian letters... do show the transition stage between the rough, elemental humor of the Comstock and the refined subtle style which flowered in *The Innocents Abroad*."<sup>74</sup> As part of his imperial argument, however, the horse information is an effective authorial tool. The Other — whether a freedman in the South or a Kanaka in Hawaii — is both a comical stock character, and a dishonest manipulator. Writing in a satirical voice, Twain is able to further his reputation as a humorist while also denigrating those deemed inferior to Westerners. Examining this comic approach, Florence argues of Twain's early writing: "Interweaving fact and fiction, these narratives are fictive truths, or better yet, true fictions. They are presented as

the authentic records of Mark Twain."<sup>75</sup> Humorously recasting his experiences, Twain is able to gloss over the stereotypical language endemic to the colonial voice he deploys in describing Hawaiians, instead comically offering himself as a concerned advisor on native deceit to potential travelers.

But Twain goes a step further than rough humor and arbitrary stereotypes when portraying race in his letters, and in doing so offers America a way to mediate the deeper social conflict surrounding Reconstruction. Two particular images stand out in a series of letters in which only passing mention of the just-ended Civil War is made. Traveling from Oahu to the island of Hawaii aboard the schooner *Boomerang*, Twain uses racially charged expression to describe the ship's cramped deck: "When the captain and Brown and myself and four other gentlemen and the wheelsman were all assembled on the little after portion of the deck which is sacred to the cabin passengers, it was full — there was not room for any more *quality* folks [my italics]."<sup>76</sup> The space allocated for such "quality" gentlemen — as opposed to the "low quality" natives — is here deemed comically inadequate by the travelers who move about the islands for leisure. Shortly hereafter, Twain describes the accommodations for Kanakas: "Another section of the deck... was full of natives.... As soon as we set sail the natives all laid down on the deck as thick as Negroes in a slave pen, and smoked and conversed and captured vermin and ate them, spit on each other and were truly sociable."<sup>77</sup> Twain's purpose here is twofold. On one hand, by consciously highlighting the racial and social differences between the diverse passengers, Twain is able to maintain his Subject status, thereby asserting American superiority. But his choice of analogy — "as thick as Negroes in a slave pen" — is also particularly effective for his Southern readers. Only they would know the slave pen, and it is through this comparison that Twain offers a familiar metaphor to the South. The colonial message is simple: these dark-skinned people are inferior — no better than the slaves recently emancipated — so America may comfortably exploit them and their land for profit. As Horsman argues: "By 1850 American expansion was viewed... as evidence of the innate superiority of the American Anglo-Saxon branch of the Caucasian race."<sup>78</sup> Coupled with his discussion of plantations in Hawaii and Louisiana, Twain makes a powerful connection to America's own racial issues. These cultural functions for Othering Pacific Islanders on the basis of race persisted throughout the nineteenth century. According to Ella Shohat and Robert Stam:

The Louisiana Purchase Expedition [in St. Louis, 1904] included a Filipino exhibit that made the Pacific Islands as much a part of "manifest destiny" as the conquest of the west. Such expositions gave utopian form to White supremacist ideology, legitimizing racial hierarchies abroad, and muting class and gender divisions among Whites at home by stressing national agency in a global project of domination.<sup>79</sup>

So as the Civil War ended and America looked abroad, Pacific domination grounded in myths of racial superiority was internalized as part of perceived national birthright for expansion. Twain can humorously characterize Kanakas as “socially” spitting on each other and eating vermin because they are universally perceived by his readers as inferior. In fact, by using the slave pen as a comic metaphor, Twain may be revealing some of the “black humor” that Patricia Mandia finds in Twain’s later work where his increased pessimism is visible.<sup>80</sup> In comically referring to images of slavery, Twain the humorist and Twain the imperialist find a common ground for their exploration of Hawaii, and his audience is once again unified through his Pacific writing.

But if America desired to control these islands, profit from them, and eliminate British influence, how would it be done? The distance between the islands and the United States made outright war too difficult, so what were America’s options? One possibility was political control, and the potential for manipulation of the Hawaiian government is manifest throughout Twain’s letters. During the past few years, he had already spent a great deal of time in Nevada observing the state legislature for the *Virginia City Union*, so the Hawaiian legislature was an obvious and familiar topic for his letters. Towards this end, Twain devotes all of his twelfth and thirteenth letters to the political system on the islands. Here, he explains for his readers that the government is composed of “The King, the Nobles, and the Commons or Representatives” and continues by describing the representative body’s makeup: “I found the legislature to consist of half a dozen white men and some thirty or forty natives. It was a dark assemblage.”<sup>81</sup> Calling attention to the “dark” ethnic composition of the assembly, Twain also foregrounds his own system of racial values. In principle, a Hawaiian legislature should feature natives as its representatives, but this “dark” group is supplemented by a salient coterie of white legislators. Again relying upon humor for effect, Twain exhibits racial stereotyping of the natives as he discusses the inadequacy of native legislators:

Now, on one occasion, a Kanaka member, who paddled over here from some barren rock or other out yonder in the ocean — some scalawag who wears nothing but a pair of socks and a plug hat when he is at home, or possibly is even more arrayed in the popular malo — got up and gave notice of a bill to authorize the construction of a suspension bridge from Oahu to Hawaii, a matter of a hundred and fifty miles! He said that natives would prefer it to the inter-island schooners, and they wouldn’t suffer seasickness on it. Up came Honorables Ku and Kulau, and Kowkow and Kiwawhoo and a lot of other clacking geese, and harried and worried this notable internal improvement until some sensible person rose and choked them off.<sup>82</sup>

I quote at length here because the passage represents both a critique of Hawaiian legislature through racial stereotypes and an appeal to Western prejudices about

the fitness of natives for self-government. Though he is using satire in relaying an absurd example of Hawaiian self-government, his narrative illustrates a widely held imperialist belief; namely, the foolish natives, all of whom share indistinguishable names, will waste their newfound political freedom on ill-conceived plans.<sup>83</sup> This dismissive treatment of the Hawaiian legislature continued once Twain was back in America in July 1866. Needing a means of financial support once his newspaper commission expired, Twain developed his "Sandwich Islands Lecture," which also deploys humor as a way to discuss Hawaii. Continuing his treatment of the Hawaiian government, Twain asserts in his lecture that the natives "do nearly everything wrong end first" and continues: "Now, you see what kind of voters you will have if you take those islands away from these people as we are pretty sure to do some day."<sup>84</sup> Twain's evaluation of the Hawaiian legislature in both his letters and his lecture is particularly engaging for his American readers, since it tapped into widely held beliefs about the implausibility of Reconstruction. As such, Twain's humor is important here and "[h]is mockery of the native Hawaiians playing at government, mimicking adults, would be resonant for his readers similarly mocking the notion of freed slaves involved in governing themselves."<sup>85</sup> Deriding the Hawaiian's through the use of racial stereotypes, Twain is able to conflate newly installed Hawaiian representatives with the freed slaves who were being elected in the South after the Civil War.

The politicizing of race also plays an important part in Twain's characterization of famed Hawaiian political figure Bill Ragsdale who was, as he puts it: "a 'half white' (half white and half Kanaka), who translated... in Kanaka with a volubility that was calculated to make a slow-spoken man like me distressingly nervous."<sup>86</sup> Attuned to the American distinctions between those with varying degrees of African blood, Twain consciously foregrounds Ragsdale's dual racial status — a biological trait that would equate him with Southern mulattoes for his readers. Though Twain praises Ragsdale, saying that he translates "with a readiness and felicity of language that [is] remarkable," he also accuses Ragsdale of dropping "in a little voluntary contribution occasionally in the way of a word or two that will make the speech utterly ridiculous."<sup>87</sup> While Twain obviously cannot speak both languages, he nonetheless seems intent on disparaging this man who possesses more foreign language skill than he does, by calling him a "rascal" for this unfounded accusation. But Twain's motives are relatively transparent. As a man of mixed race, Ragsdale must be denounced, for he represents one of America's greatest postbellum concerns: racial mixing. Ragsdale is not of pure Hawaiian or Western blood, so Twain must actively asperse his character. There are, however, other reasons for these portrayals of Ragsdale and Hawaiian legislature beyond race and connections to Reconstruction. One is tied directly to colonization. If the natives cannot govern themselves, then some "civilized" Western power,

preferably America, will have to take over. Since a significant part of the colonizer's mission is to understand the governmental system of the colonized, Twain's discussion of Hawaiian politics provides just such important imperial information. Vicente Rafael explains: "The culmination of colonial rule, self-government can... be achieved only when the subject has learned to colonize itself."<sup>88</sup> As Hawaiians conduct their own legislature, they act out a Western form of rule — but one that gives only limited power to powerful white business interests. Through annexation, though, America could exert even deeper control over this valuable island group by offering "American Anglo-Saxons as a separate, innately superior people who were destined to bring good government [and] commercial prosperity."<sup>89</sup> With Twain's detailed information on the Hawaiian legislature as an intelligence report, American readers and investors could better understand the islands they would one day come to control.

Twain's "Sandwich Islands Lecture" continues his pattern of both informing and entertaining his audience, while also reinforcing the colonial system through expanded treatment of Hawaiian culture. Acknowledging in his lecture concerns that go unaddressed in his *Union* letters, Twain mentions leprosy — a widespread disease on the islands that would later be discussed in explicit detail by both Charles Warren Stoddard and Jack London. The history of leprosy on the islands is important for understanding its place in Hawaiian society. The disease was first documented on the islands in 1835 in a woman on Kauai. In 1865, amidst rising concern, King Kamehameha V signed "An Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy" into law. With this act, land was set aside for isolating those infected. On January 6, 1866, only two months before Twain would arrive and one week before the *Ajax* began service to Honolulu, the first "shipment" of patients was sent to the settlement at Kalawao, Molokai. By 1873, the year that Stoddard would publish his *South-Sea Idylls*, the Hawaiian government had increased its attempts to find and isolate all infected. Twain elides this painful fact of nineteenth-century Hawaiian life through the use of humor. Early in his lecture, Twain tells his audience: "Unfortunately, the first object I saw in the Sandwich Islands was a repulsive one. It was a case of Oriental leprosy, of so dreadful a nature that I have never been able to get it out of my mind since."<sup>90</sup> Rather than expound upon the horrors of the disease, he continues with a pun intended to put his listeners at ease: "I don't intend that it shall give a disagreeable complexion to this lecture at all."<sup>91</sup> Beyond youthful bad taste, why would Twain use humor in discussing a ravaging disease? Since leprosy was almost exclusively confined to native Islanders and Chinese laborers, early reference to the condition in his lecture functions as a convenient means of allaying listeners' fears and implying racial difference. His comic voice also addresses the rapid decline in the Hawaiian population. Twain explains: "When these islands were discovered the population was about 400,000... [and has] dwindled down to

55,000"; and concludes sarcastically: "to speak figuratively, they are retiring from business pretty fast. When they pick up and leave we will take possession as lawful heirs."<sup>92</sup> If these Others succumb to disease, Americans will gladly take advantage of the business opportunities created. Later, in describing the islanders, Twain continues his reversion to racialized language: "In color, the natives are a rich, dark brown — a sort of back and tan. A very pleasing tint."<sup>93</sup> By fetishizing the Islanders' "pleasing" skin, Twain can both pique audience interest in these exotics and set them apart as dark and inferior. He ends his talk by referring to the islands as the "land of indolence and dreams" where Americans will find "emancipation from labor."<sup>94</sup> Debilitating leprosy and exploitation of foreign labor receive only limited attention in Twain's "Sandwich Islands Lecture." Instead, by providing his captivated audience with farcical one-dimensional presentations of uncivilized Hawaiians, Twain's "readers are able to reflect on the problem of the savage at a safe distance."<sup>95</sup> With American colonialism still in the developing stages, Twain and his readers could cautiously approach the issue of empire with the same Southwestern wit that characterized Twain's California writing.

As a result of his clever humor, attention to economic possibilities, and reflection of postbellum American interests, Twain's journey to Hawaii was a true authorial triumph. Day explains: "When Mark Twain returned to California after the Sandwich Islands odyssey, he was 'about the best known honest man on the Pacific Coast.'"<sup>96</sup> Moreover, Twain built upon this success by continuing to deliver his "Sandwich Islands Lecture" and incorporating material from the letters into *Roughing It* which he published to popular and critical acclaim in 1872.<sup>97</sup> Even after he gave the lecture for the final time in December 1873, his imperialist tone persisted in his writing. In 1873, Twain wrote two letters to the editor of the *New York Tribune*. In the first, Twain recalled: "I spent several months in the Sandwich Islands, six years ago, &, if I could have my way about it, I would go back there and remain the rest of my days."<sup>98</sup> In the remainder of the letter, Twain draws upon his original *Sacramento Union* Letters to describe the climate, population, and religion of the islands, highlighting their attractiveness for Americans. In a subsequent letter three days later, Twain discusses the death of King Kamehameha V, and asserts: "Now, let us annex the islands. Think how we could build up that whaling trade!... We could make sugar enough there to supply all of America."<sup>99</sup> Twain closes his imperialist letter resoundingly: "We can make that little bunch of sleepy islands the hottest corner on earth, & array it in the moral splendor of our high & holy civilization. Annexation is what the poor islanders need."<sup>100</sup> Only a few years removed from the islands, Twain's imperial interest continued to constitute a major part of his public persona.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Twain's unabashed enthusiasm for annexation had become staunch anti-imperialism. How did such a dramatic

transformation occur? As a starting point, Twain's unfinished novel of 1884 offers some clues. In a letter to his close friend William Dean Howells on January 7, 1884, Twain wrote:

My billiard table is stacked with books relating to the Sandwich Islands... I have saturated myself with knowledge of that unimaginably beautiful land & that most strange & fascinating people. And I have begun a story.... I start Bill Ragsdale at 12 years of age, & the heroine at 4.... Then these two will become educated Christians, & highly civilized. And then I will jump 15 years, & do Ragsdale's leper business.<sup>101</sup>

Referring here to the "unimaginably beautiful land" as he had also done in his 1873 *Tribune* letters, Twain demonstrates a shift to a view of the islands' beauty not visible in his *Union* letters. His pastoral alteration is readily visible in the extant fragment of the unfinished Hawaii novel Twain referenced in the Howells letter. The first chapter begins:

The date is 1840. Scene, the true Isles of the Blest; that is to say, the Sandwich Islands — to this day the peacefulest, restfulest, sunniest, balmiest, dreamiest haven of refuge for a worn and weary spirit the earth can offer. Away out there in the mid-solitudes of the vast Pacific, and far down in the edge of the tropics, they lie asleep on the waves, perpetually green and beautiful...<sup>102</sup>

In this and other idyllic passages from the Hawaii novel fragment, Twain calls attention to a pastoral vision of Hawaii almost invisible in his commercially oriented *Union* letters. Such attention to the feminized landscape, as Annette Kolodny and Leo Marx have noted, is a standard response of colonial writers facing the "virgin" landscape.<sup>103</sup> Twain's nature description appears, however, only after the colonial and commercial vision of the islands can be vocalized. Sumida explains that as Twain became distanced from his 1866 visit to Hawaii: "A simplistic, timeless Hawaiian paradise comes to dominate his reminiscences, even as his concerns about American military and political adventures in Hawaii and the Philippines grew more pronounced."<sup>104</sup> Speculation on the fate of the novel is beyond my scope here, but mention of Ragsdale as a major character in the Hawaii novel suggests that Twain may in fact be working at a deeper level than the "sentimental vision" suggested by Sumida.<sup>105</sup> Previously, Twain had treated leprosy in an offhand and flippant manner in his "Sandwich Island Lecture." If he is guilty of suppressing mention of leprosy in the *Sacramento Union* letters to appease his business-minded sponsors, Twain may have also abandoned his Hawaii novel for similar reasons. But his decision to write about Ragsdale and the "leper business" is important, for as Sumida suggests, as a half-white, half-Kanaka character, Ragsdale "was symbolic of the conjunction of cultures that Twain planned to dramatize."<sup>106</sup> Perhaps,



as what Justin Kaplan calls "the literary and psychological options of a new, created identity called Mark Twain"<sup>107</sup> came to bear on a more confident and more disaffected writer, the maintenance of this comic persona developed in the Hawaii letters began to give way to a more politically conscious man. Maturely confronting the horror of leprosy, a scourge brought to Hawaii by foreigners, may have been instrumental in the significant late-nineteenth-century transformations visible in the character and literary output of Mark Twain.

Interestingly, a 1906 article entitled "William Dean Howells" appearing in *Harpers* magazine is signed not Mark Twain, but SL Clemens.<sup>108</sup> Such a reversion to his given name during the twentieth century was not entirely unusual for Mark Twain, since he had signed it a number of times to newspaper letters and editorials. But using the name "SL Clemens" in an essay praising Howells is significant, because "[b]oth were anti-imperialists by the 1890s, strongly critical of American capitalism... and opponents of the expansionist drive that had taken U.S. naval power to Cuba and the Philippines."<sup>109</sup> Moreover, in a 1901 essay entitled "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," Clemens would go even deeper in his indictment of colonialism, claiming that though colonialism has been profitable, "[w]e have been injudicious."<sup>110</sup> In making the shift from encouraging American population of Hawaii to denouncing the deleterious effect of colonialism, Twain has undergone a noteworthy transformation. Hoffman concurs: "Anti-imperialism was a radical position even for Mark Twain, whose politics had always been more progressive than Sam Clemens."<sup>111</sup> This shift is not easy to explain, for as Gore Vidal writes: "When one contemplates the anti-imperialism of Mark Twain, it is hard to tell just where it came from. During his lifetime the whole country was — like himself — on the make, in every sense."<sup>112</sup> Part of the change may be due to the "double vision" that Bhabha sees throughout colonial discourse.<sup>113</sup> On one hand, Mark Twain covets the commercial value and prosperity offered by colonialism; but on the other, a maturing Samuel Clemens grasps the true loss of native culture to Western imperialism. No longer obligated to appease a commercial audience as he was with his Hawaii letters, Clemens could allow his true meditations on imperialism to emerge as his popularity increased. Exposure to the results of rampant colonialism truly transformed the political and social outlook of Mark Twain. Moreover, this transformation led to a corresponding alteration in Twain's use of literary humor. America's humorist had evolved and "Mark Twain's dark side, his pessimism regarding the human condition... his extreme sensitivity to man's mistreatment of man"<sup>114</sup> eliminated both the need for the humor that masked imperialism in his Hawaii letters and the requirement that capitalist interests be upheld. Twain still stands as America's greatest humorist, and his voice is inextricable from American comedy. As Blair argues: "American humor... gave Mark Twain his materials, his methods, and his inspiration. His success was merely the working out of its

attempted achievements on the level of genius.”<sup>115</sup> But when the specter of American colonial expansion arose during the late nineteenth century, Twain, like America, lost his comic innocence, and the mask shielding colonialism from view disappeared.

In 1895, together with his wife Olivia and daughter Clara, Twain left the west coast for a worldwide lecture tour. He describes their first anticipated stop:

On the seventh day out we saw a dim vast bulk standing up out of the wastes of the Pacific and knew that that spectral promontory was Diamond Head, a piece of this world which I had not seen before for twenty-nine years. So we were nearing Honolulu, the capital city of the Sandwich Islands — those islands which to me were Paradise.... Not any other thing could have stirred me as the sight of that great rock did.<sup>116</sup>

After these many years, Twain was looking forward to his return, and as David Zmijewski explains: “Hawaii had wanted the man back, even if only for a short time, as much as the man had dreamed of returning.”<sup>117</sup> The reunion of man and place would not happen, however, because cholera had broken out in Honolulu and Twain was confined to the ship. He laments in *Following the Equator*: “This suddenly did my dream of twenty-nine years go to ruin.”<sup>118</sup> But the “dream” of these many years had persisted, nonetheless, since Hawaii provided Twain with a great deal of material in his less than five months there in 1866. Through the letters that delineated his experiences on the islands, Twain was able “to refashion himself as a figure of national consolidation.”<sup>119</sup> In doing so, Clemens launched the career of Mark Twain, perhaps America’s greatest writer and performer. With these entertaining travel descriptions, Twain created a comic persona that sided with American imperial and capitalist interests, while simultaneously uniting a divided America around economic gain and subjugation of “lesser” island natives. The author could not maintain this humorous imperial stance indefinitely; eventually the figure of Mark Twain gave way to a reemergence of Samuels Clemens, for whom “[i]mperialism and tyranny... were great evils.”<sup>120</sup> Even as his imperial conscience emerged, Clemens could not escape the cultural milieu through which Mark Twain had been created, and his Hawaii letters resonate for a nation needing a reassuring voice calling them to “populate these islands with Americans.”<sup>121</sup> As the years passed, both Charles Warren Stoddard and Jack London would respond to Twain’s call for migration, and each would intensify Hawaii’s place in America’s colonial vision.

## NOTES

1. In addition to the over 600,000 killed, an additional 400,000 were wounded in the war. For a more detailed breakdown of the dead, wounded, and missing in the

Civil War, see Thomas L. Livermore, *Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America: 1861-1865* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 2-8; Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative*, Vol. 3 (New York: Random House, 1974), 1040-1041.

2. Foote, 1041.
3. Foote, 1042.
4. For a discussion of the economic, political, and social aspects of Reconstruction, see Foote 1042-1048, and Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).
5. A number of thorough discussions of Twain's time in the West are available. See, for example, Joseph L. Coulombe, "Mark Twain and the West: Money, Manhood, and Persona in the Early Writings" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1998); Guy Cardwell, "Author, Intention, Text: the California Mark Twain," *Review* 11 (1989), 255-88; Paul Fatout, *Mark Twain in Virginia City* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964); Edgar M. Branch, *The Literary Apprenticeship of Mark Twain* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950); Ivan Benson, *Mark Twain's Western Years* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1938).
6. Andrew Hoffman, *Inventing Mark Twain: The Lives of Samuel Langhorne Clemens* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1997), 101-102. Though Twain never wrote a book specifically about Hawaii, some of the material from his letters was incorporated into the Hawaii sections of *Roughing It*.
7. A. Grove Day, Introduction to *Mark Twain's Letters from Hawaii*, by Mark Twain (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975), vii.
8. Hoffman, 102. See also Amy Kaplan, "Imperial Triangles: Mark Twain's Foreign Affairs," *Modern Fiction Studies* 43:1 (Spring 1997): 240. Kaplan notes a similar commercial motive for the *Sacramento Union* sending Twain to Hawaii.
9. Haskell Springer, Introduction to *America and the Sea: A Literary History* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995). Justin Kaplan explains that even in 1866, travelers who were looking for the quickest route from San Francisco to New York would travel by ship to Nicaragua, cross the Isthmus by mule or wagon, and then take another ship to New York (13). The ending of this difficult journey with the completion of the transcontinental railroad can be linked to the time saved by opening steamer service between Hawaii and San Francisco. Each made distances shrink and led to the closing of different frontiers.
10. Amy Kaplan, "Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 14. As her title suggests, Kaplan sees a need to link the rise of American hegemony abroad with attendant issues at home. As such, my study attempts to find connections between America's desire for Hawaii as empire and pressing issues at home such as Reconstruction.
11. The American public was aware of this drive for expansion. For example, in a letter written shortly after the close of the war, John Sherman acknowledged: "The truth is, the close of the war with our resources unimpaired gives an elevation, a scope to the ideas of leading capitalists far higher than anything undertaken before. They talk of millions as confidently as formerly of thousands." Quoted in Foote, 1042.

12. Though instrumental in his development as a writer, Twain's *Letters from Hawaii* are among the least studied of his works. For example, Albert Bigelow Paine's *Mark Twain: A Biography* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1912), devotes only a page to the time Twain spent in Hawaii. Justin Kaplan's biography *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966), begins after Twain returned from Hawaii and is leaving for New York.
13. Walter Blair, *Native American Humor* (New York: American Book Company, 1937), 160. Blair's introduction provides a comprehensive overview of what he calls "native" American humor as it developed from 1630 to the end of the nineteenth century. See also his *Horse Sense in American Humor: From Ben Franklin to Ogden Nash* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942). For studies of Twain's comic voice see Jeffrey Alan Melton, "The Wild Teacher of the Pacific Slope: Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Instruction," *Thalia: Studies in Literary Humor* 16:1-2 (1996), 46-52; Bruce Michelson, *Mark Twain on the Loose: A Comic Writer and the American Self* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).
14. Day notes that we cannot trust the dates of Twain's letters fully, since some were written after he had left Hawaii and dated earlier. For a thorough overview of Twain's time in Hawaii, see Walter Francis Frear, *Mark Twain and Hawaii* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1947). As governor of Hawaii from 1907-1913, Frear had intimate knowledge of Twain's influence and legacy on the islands.
15. Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters from the Sandwich Islands*, ed. with an Introduction by A. Grove Day (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1976).
16. Twain also uses Brown as a convenient imaginary companion in his later travel letters written for the *Alta California* aboard the *Quaker City*. See Franklin Walker and G. Ezra Dane, eds., *Mark Twain's Travels With Mr. Brown* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1940).
17. Twain, *Hawaii*, 32.
18. Twain, *Hawaii*, 32-34.
19. Twain, *Hawaii*, 34.
20. Don Florence, *Persona and Humor in Mark Twain's Early Writing* (Columbia, MO, and London: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 51-53. Though he devotes limited space to Twain's Hawaii Letters, Florence's study is relevant for its discussion of Twain's development as a humorist in *Roughing It* and *The Innocents Abroad*.
21. Charles Neider, ed. *The Comic Mark Twain Reader* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), xxi.
22. Twain, *Hawaii*, 6.
23. Twain, *Hawaii*, 7-8.
24. Twain, *Hawaii*, 10.
25. David P. Wharton writes: "Interpretation of a successful sea voyage as a sign of providential protection . . . did not end . . . with the colonial period. Rather, it remained . . . in the national consciousness as a metaphor for the manifest destiny of a nation." David P. Wharton, "The Colonial Era" in *America and the Sea: A Literary History*, ed. Haskell Springer (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 34. Wharton's emphasis is on Colonial narratives describing the passage from Europe to America, but the belief that a proper sea journey boded

- well for the traveler and suggested a national mission persists through Twain and into the twentieth century. Also see Robert E. Spiller, et al., eds., *Literary History of the United States*, 3rd edition (New York: MacMillan, 1963), 33-39.
26. Day notes that trade and agriculture were "of interest to American businessmen of the time . . . who would be [Twain's] main readers" (viii).
  27. Twain, *Hawaii*, 11.
  28. Florence, 8.
  29. Twain, *Hawaii*, 12.
  30. Rob Wilson, "Exporting Christian Transcendentalism, Importing Hawaiian Sugar: The Trans-Americanization of Hawai'i," *American Literature* 72:3 (September 2000): 521.
  31. Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 286.
  32. Amy Kaplan, "Left Alone," 11.
  33. John Samson, "Personal Narratives, Journals, and Diaries," in Springer, 93.
  34. Richard Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Brodhead contends that critics of American literature must consider "the diverse and changing worlds that have been constructed around writing in American social life" in order to assess how culture and writing interact (8-9).
  35. Hoffman, 101.
  36. For a discussion of Clemens' use of the pseudonym "Mark Twain," see Horst H. Kruse, "Mark Twain's *Nom de Plume*: Some Mysteries Resolved," *Mark Twain Journal* 30:1 (Spring 1992): 1-32. Also see Fatout.
  37. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Foreword" to *The Innocents Abroad*, by Mark Twain (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), xii. Though Fishkin refers primarily to *The Innocents Abroad*, a travel narrative based on Twain's 1867 voyage, Twain's power as a voice of American imperialism has a clear genesis in his Hawaiian letters.
  38. Horsman, 189.
  39. Twain, *Hawaii*, 210.
  40. Twain, *Hawaii*, 260.
  41. For a discussion of American economic endeavors in Hawaii, see Noel J. Kent, *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).
  42. Amy Kaplan, "Imperial Triangles," 244.
  43. Twain, *Hawaii*, 260.
  44. Amy Kaplan, "Imperial Triangles," 244. Kaplan's discussion makes strong connections between slavery and imperialism, particularly after the Civil War.
  45. Twain, *Hawaii*, 271.
  46. Dana D. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading 'Race' in American Literature, 1638-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
  47. Twain, *Hawaii*, 271.
  48. Brian Collins, "Presidential Reconstructions: Mark Twain's *Letters from Hawaii* and the Integration of Civil Society," *American Studies* 37:1 (Spring 1996): 55.
  49. Collins, 55.
  50. Twain, *Hawaii*, 271-2.

51. Twain, *Hawaii*, 273.
52. Wilson, 537.
53. Twain, *Hawaii*, 59.
54. Twain, *Hawaii*, 60.
55. Constance Rourke, *American Humor: A Study of the National Character* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), 168. Neider cites Twain himself who claimed in "How to Tell a Story" that "The humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of the telling" (xxi).
56. Twain, *Hawaii*, 60.
57. Florence, 6.
58. Twain, *Hawaii*, 60.
59. Twain, *Hawaii*, 150. See Letter 13 for Twain's full account of the *Hornet* tragedy.
60. Day, x.
61. During his time convalescing, Twain heard about the sailors' rescue and was brought to the hospital to speak with them. Two of the survivors, the Ferguson brothers, each kept diaries, and from these and the ship's log, Twain was able to tell the story of the *Hornet*. The ordeal so intrigued Twain, that he copied significant portions of the diaries into his journal. These appear in *Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals*, ed. Frederick Anderson, et al. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1975).
62. Hoffman, 501.
63. Mark Twain, "My Debut as a Literary Person," in *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963). In the essay, Twain recounts his 1866 trip to Hawaii and the story of the *Hornet* survivors.
64. Twain, *Hawaii*, 155.
65. Collins, 59. Collins discusses the *Hornet* letter in terms of such issues as nineteenth-century civil society and the way that Captain Mitchell is praised as a keeper of order by his crew. Without such restraint and order, civil society is not possible (57-60).
66. Collins, 60.
67. Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985). See also John O'Sullivan, "Annexation," *Democratic Review* 17 (July 1845): 5.
68. Chandra Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggle," chap. in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 21.
69. Amy Kaplan, "Imperial Triangles," 243.
70. Twain, *Hawaii*, 48.
71. Twain, *Hawaii*, 48-9.
72. Twain, *Hawaii*, 50.
73. Blair, *Native*, 160.
74. Paine, 168.
75. Florence, 3.
76. Twain, *Hawaii*, 195.
77. Twain, *Hawaii*, 196.
78. Horsman, 1.

79. Ella Shohat and Robert Stamm, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 107-8. See also Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 236.
80. Patricia M. Mandia, *Comedic Pathos: Black Humor in Mark Twain's Fiction* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland Publishers, 1991), 123-4.
81. Twain, *Hawaii*, 105, 107.
82. Twain, *Hawaii*, 112.
83. Though Twain may also be satirizing United States' Legislatures that he had witnessed firsthand in Nevada and California, the power of his humor rests in his depiction of these native legislatures still in their infancy and open to imperial coercion.
84. Mark Twain, "Sandwich Islands Lecture," in *Mark Twain Speaking*, ed. Paul Fatout (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1976), 11. Twain first gave this lecture on October 2, 1866, in San Francisco and it was well received.
85. Amy Kaplan, "Imperial Triangles," 245.
86. Twain, *Hawaii*, 110. See Frear 26-28 for a more detailed discussion of Ragsdale's career. See also William J. Scheick, *The Half-Blood: A Cultural Symbol in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1979) for a discussion of mixed-race characters as devices in American writing.
87. Twain, *Hawaii*, 111.
88. Vicente L. Rafael, "White Love: Surveillance and Nationalist Resistance in the U.S. Colonization of the Philippines," in Kaplan and Pease, 186.
89. Horsman, 1-2.
90. Twain, "Lecture," 4.
91. Twain, "Lecture," 4.
92. Twain, "Lecture," 6.
93. Twain, "Lecture," 7.
94. Twain, "Lecture," 14.
95. Collins, 57.
96. Day, vi. Day quotes Twain's remark about himself from his essay "My Debut as a Literary Person."
97. The Hawaii chapters of *Roughing It* are based almost entirely on the *Sacramento Union* letters. Drewey Wayne Gunn calls the text "an important new venture in [Twain's] development as a writer." Drewey Wayne Gunn, "The Monolithic Structure of *Roughing It*," *American Literature* 61:4 (December 1989): 571. Florence argues that in *Roughing It*, "Twain discovers for the first time how to control a comic narrative fully," a skill not entirely present in the Hawaii letters (93).
98. Mark Twain, "Letter to the *New York Tribune*," January 3, 1873. Repr. in *Mark Twain's Letters*, ed. Lin Salamo and Harriet Elinor Smith (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: The University of California Press, 1997), 557.
99. Twain, *Letters*, 571. In 1872, powerful and widely admired King Kamehameha V died, lending political instability to the islands, and rekindling interest in American annexation of the islands.
100. Twain, *Letters*, 573.
101. Mark Twain Letter to William Dean Howells, January 7, 1884, repr. in *Mark Twain-Howells Letters: the Correspondence of Samuel L. Clemens and William D. Howells, 1872-1910*, ed. Henry Nash Smith and William M. Gibson (Cam-

- bridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 460-1. Twain expressed similar love of the islands in an 1881 letter to Charles Warren Stoddard, where he wrote: "What I have always longed for, was the privilege of living forever away up on one of those mountains in the Sandwich Islands overlooking the sea" (qtd. in Frear, 89).
102. Quoted in Stephen H. Sumida, "Reevaluating Mark Twain's Novel of Hawaii," *American Literature* 61:4 (December 1989), 593. Only seventeen pages of the manuscript exist, and they are housed at the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. See also Sumida "Our Whole Voice," 62-77, for a detailed discussion of Twain's Hawaii novel.
  103. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).
  104. Sumida, "Reevaluating," 591.
  105. There is significant debate among scholars about whether the Hawaii novel was completed. In a January 24, 1884, letter to Mrs. Fairbanks, Twain wrote: "this book is not humorous, but a serious book, & may damn me, tho' Livy says *No*. I do wish you would come and read it in the MS & judge it before it goes to the printers. Will you?" Mark Twain letter to Mrs. Fairbanks, 24 Jan 1884, repr. in *Mark Twain to Mrs. Fairbanks*, ed. Dixon Wechter (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 1949), 255. This letter suggests that the novel was finished and lost, or perhaps, as scholars such as Day and Fred Lorch have suggested, the material was incorporated into Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and even his *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. See Day, xii-xiii, and Fred W. Lorch, "Hawaiian Feudalism and Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*," *American Literature* 30:1 (March 1958), 50-66. Lorch speculates on similarities between King Arthur and King Kamehameha V, as a basis for finding Twain's Hawaii novel as a source for *A Connecticut Yankee*. See also David Joseph Zmijewski, "Huck Finn and Hawaii: A Study of the Hawaiian Influence on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii, 1998). Zmijewski finds elements of Twain's travels in Hawaii present in *Huck Finn*.
  106. Sumida, "Reevaluating," 598. See 598-600 for an extended discussion of Ragsdale's place in the unfinished novel.
  107. Justin Kaplan, 9. That this persona emerged after the 1866 visit to Hawaii is the major reason that Kaplan begins his biography after Twain has returned from the islands.
  108. Mark Twain, "William Dean Howells," in Neider, *Essays*, 400-407.
  109. Roger B. Stein, "Realism and Beyond," in Springer, 198.
  110. Twain, *Essays*, 286.
  111. Hoffman, 434-5.
  112. Gore Vidal, "Introduction" to *Following the Equator*, by Mark Twain (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), xxxiv-xxxv.
  113. Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," chap. in *The Location of Culture*, 88.
  114. Neider, *Comic*, xv.



115. Blair, *Native*, 162. In his discussion of the development of American humor, Blair concludes: "It is impossible . . . to discover any author who furnishes a better climax to a consideration of American humor than Mark Twain" (147).
116. Mark Twain, *Following the Equator*, ed. Shelley Fisher Fishkin (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 48.
117. David Zmijewski, "Hawaii Awaits a Legend," *Mark Twain Journal* 26:2 (Fall 1988), 26.
118. Twain, *Following*, 58.
119. Amy Kaplan, "Imperial Triangles," 243.
120. Vidal, xxxvi.
121. By 1877, Reconstruction was over, and freed slaves saw an evaporation of their rights; by 1883, the Supreme Court would overturn the Civil Rights Act of 1875 and would institute "separate but equal" as law; United States imperialism was on the rise with the Spanish-American War and the annexation of Hawaii in 1900.



## Chapter Four

# Charles Warren Stoddard and the American “Homocolonial” Literary Excursion

When early in *Typee* Herman Melville’s Tommo stood aback, stunned by the “licentiousness” of the “swimming nymphs” rushing to meet his ship as it arrived at Nukuheva harbor, his dismayed reaction is marked by the assumption of a priggish Yankee persona that was common for a nineteenth-century New England character. Melville’s presentation of Tommo was, of course, a calculated move. As a young writer working to gain a foothold in the literary marketplace, Melville showed a keen recognition of the cultural work inherent to his writing on two distinct fronts. On one hand, he was appealing to the prim attitudes towards sexuality and miscegenation held by his nineteenth-century readers. On the other, he was articulating the appealing “consumable otherness” that has popularized tales of adventure and travel to distant locales throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Titillating his readers with vivid descriptions of native women whose “jet black tresses stream[ed] over their shoulders,” he nonetheless watched this “savage vivacity”<sup>1</sup> from afar to emphasize his reserved adherence to socially mandated prudence. Though most Americans would not become fully aware of the decimation wrought upon native islanders by foreign sailors and traders until later in the century, Melville’s readers were at least privy to knowledge of the temptations presented by these interactions with native women. His depiction of Tommo allows a conveniently dualistic vision that quietly licenses both forms of conquest: sexual and colonial. With a collective wink, American society could ignore these offenses by sailors who had spent many months at sea. Moreover, such seemingly “immoral” and “corrupting” relationships were socially sanctioned because of the secondary racial status given to South Pacific Islanders and because of their clearly heterosexual nature.

Melville's *Typee* serves as a valuable starting point for consideration of once-prominent nineteenth-century American author Charles Warren Stoddard. The praised author of an early folio of boyhood poems, contributor to the first issue of *The Overland Monthly*, and friend to such celebrated authors as Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Mark Twain, Jack London, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Mary Austin, Stoddard gradually faded into obscurity as his career and life progressed. By his death in 1909, he was mentioned only retrospectively as part of the long passed nineteenth-century California literary scene. *National Magazine* wrote: "The death of this noted writer, poet, scholar, and educator leaves a void in the literary ranks of the Pacific Coast that is keenly felt by many, especially as the list of the earlier writers is growing shorter year by year."<sup>2</sup> The "void" left by Stoddard was hardly recognized by the public, however, as his popularity had declined steadily since the 1890s. His final days were marked by depression, loneliness, and a desire to leave no directly personal information after his death. In his Monterey, California apartment, the dying Stoddard was aided by his housekeeper as he burned many of his letters, manuscripts, and personal papers. What we know of Stoddard's personal life has now been correspondingly diminished by this impulsive reaction to his personal decline. How is it that Stoddard's promising literary career faded from both the popular and critical scene in America, leading to the near-erasure of many remnants of his career? An examination of Stoddard's best-known text, *South-Sea Idyls*, helps to answer this perplexing question. Initially praised in literary and popular circles, but later ignored by both critics and the public, the text is a window into Stoddard's late-nineteenth-century literary and cultural world. Full of stories depicting South-Sea Islanders and cleverly veiled homosexuality, *South-Sea Idyls* draws attention to heretofore hidden homoerotic aspects of American colonialism. In foregrounding such concealed behavior, the text raises crucial issues surrounding American perceptions of sexuality, leprosy, and colonized foreigners — pressing matters inherited from Melville's *Typee* and Twain's *Letters from Hawaii*.

Though he made his name as composer of longer works, Stoddard's first literary interest was in poetry, and under the pseudonym "Pip Pipperod," he contributed a number of poems to the *Golden Era*. In retrospect, Stoddard can actually be labeled a moderately successful poet in his youth. Roger Austen explains: "Stoddard's career as a boy poet can be charted clearly. He made his poetic debut in book form with the publication of *Outcroppings*, the first anthology of California verse. [It]... was edited by Bret Harte and published in December 1865."<sup>3</sup> Though it marked a milestone in California literature, the poems of *Outcroppings* were hardly remarkable literary endeavors. They were more parodies of fine verse than actual first-rate verse.<sup>4</sup> Patrick D. Morrow writes: "Judging from the violent disapproval of the volume by virtually every northern California and Nevada news-

paper, what the public wanted was an all-inclusive anthology that would print every local versifier's work regardless of merit, making the volume a showcase for every California town's 'cultural' products."<sup>5</sup> Criticism aside, publication in *Outcroppings* was an important literary calling card for Stoddard, and he subsequently sent copies of his *Outcroppings* poems with introductory cover letters to famous nineteenth-century poets. Encouragingly, he "received mildly favorable responses from Melville, Longfellow, Emerson, and Tennyson, among others."<sup>6</sup> Confident and established, Stoddard next published his poetry in a number of magazines and newspapers, including a poem entitled "In the Sierra" in the first issue of the *Overland Monthly*. It now appeared that California had found a new young poet to sing of its dramatic landscapes and impressive vistas.

No matter how fruitful the state proved for this young author, California would not be the source of material for Stoddard's next series of works, however. In the spring of 1870, Stoddard began making plans for a visit to Tahiti. What was his motivation? He "needed material for a few more tales that could... 'fill out' a collection of tales suggested by Bret Harte."<sup>7</sup> Stoddard spent three months in Tahiti, returning there again briefly in 1872.<sup>8</sup> These trips, supplemented by Stoddard's previous adventures in Hawaii, provided the bulk of the background information for *South-Sea Idyls*.<sup>9</sup> The shift from California to the South Seas as subject can be attributed to the corresponding shift in America's frontier. With the opening of the Overland Railroad in 1869, San Francisco was no longer an isolated outpost producing literature of the continent's edge, so, like fellow California writer Mark Twain, Stoddard required another frontier for his literary aspirations. He found such a place in the exotic world of the South Seas. Upon its initial publication in the United States in 1873, *South-Sea Idyls* was far from a literary success, however, receiving no more than minor public recognition and selling only modestly.<sup>10</sup> In this collection of stories, Stoddard creatively recounts his travels on sea and land, and, most importantly, fictionalizes his relationships with a number of native islanders. With republication in 1892, the collection included a foreword by *Atlantic Monthly* editor William Dean Howells.<sup>11</sup> Praising the collection in a letter addressed to "My Dear Stoddard," Howells writes: "It gives me such very great pleasure to hear you are bringing out a new edition of South Sea Idyls"; and calls Stoddard's work "the lightest, sweetest, wildest, freshest things that ever were written about the life of that summer ocean."<sup>12</sup> Howells closes his letter even more applaudingly: "Now I hope your luck is coming, and that the whole English-reading world will recognize in your work the classic it should have known before."<sup>13</sup> In this foreword, the highly respected "dean" of American letters suggested a bright literary future for Stoddard. Since the second edition of *South-Sea Idyls* sold far better and received greater critical attention than the first, Stoddard's continued success appeared preordained.<sup>14</sup> Such far-reaching recognition was not

to be had by Stoddard, though — the consequence of Stoddard's own personal problems as well as prevailing American social biases. These cultural factors have deep links to the politics of American colonialism, a fickle American readership, and a developing homophobia in the United States.

First published in 1873, *South Sea-Idyls* is a partly fictionalized account of Stoddard's South Sea travels during his twenties. The collection's first story, "In the Cradle of Deep," carefully recounts his first trip to the Hawaiian Islands. Having spent "forty days in the great desert of the sea,"<sup>15</sup> Stoddard's seafaring narrator describes his first maritime journey: "In many volumes of adventure I had read of sea-perils: I was at last to learn the full interpretation of their picturesque horrors. Our little craft, the *Petrel*, had buffeted the boisterous waves for five long weeks."<sup>16</sup> After a few more days of this initiation to a sailor's life, and many harrowing tales of stormy weather from seasoned sailors, conditions change dramatically in the tropics. The narrator writes: "by and by came daybreak, and after that the sea went down, down, down, into a deep, dead calm, when all the elements seemed to have gone to sleep after their furious warfare."<sup>17</sup> Approaching the islands not only produces a calming effect on the *Petrel*, but has a mystifying effect on the narrator as well. Continuing his introduction to the previously unknown world of the South Seas, he writes admiringly:

Down went the swarthy sun into his tent of clouds; the waves were of amber; the fervid sky was flushed; it looked as though something splendid were about to happen up there.... Then came the purplest twilight; and then the sky blossomed all over with the biggest, brightest, ripest, goldenest stars... and I conjured up my spells of savage enchantment, my blessed islands, my reefs baptized with silver spray; I saw the broad fan-leaves of the banana droop in the motionless air; and through the tropical night the palms aspired heavenward, while I lay dreaming my sea-dream in the cradle of the deep.<sup>18</sup>

On one level, this extended passage is representative of the veneration for nature visible in the work of many American nature writers. Viewing a tranquil scene, the narrator emphasizes the beauty marked by the "tent of clouds" and "waves... of amber." But this splendor soon leads the narrator to a dream with a twofold literary message. First, the narrator chooses a "my" possessive point of view in his musings about what he has not yet seen on the islands. For him, this imagined location is not a bastion of civilization, but rather a place of unbridled "enchantment," and as a Westerner, the narrator takes unofficial ownership over what he calls "my islands" and "my reefs." Moreover, this passage also calls attention to creation of a Western literature of the Other through his emphasis on the "savage" element he expects to find. Still lounging aboard a ship bound for a land still unknown to him, the narrator nonetheless imagines a place where the feral and uncivilized will gar-

ner his attention. As a result of this classically Western predisposition, Stoddard's text foregrounds the dreamlike creation of a foreign literary landscape. In this mysterious "frontier," the narrator suggests, his imagination, experiences, and creative visions, as much as actual events, will play a significant artistic role in the construction of a fictionalized South Seas narrative.

Stoddard's uncommon fictional rendering of his journey to the Pacific — one that denies typical colonial intentions on one level while reinforcing them on another — is particularly noteworthy for the landscape descriptions visible in other seafaring tales such as "In a Transport." As his ship approaches the islands made famous by Melville's *Typee*, the narrator writes gleefully:

How different, how very different those sleepy days when we were drifting on towards the Marquesas Islands!... The island seemed to give out a kind of magnetic heat that made our blood tingle. We gravitated toward it with an almost irresistible impulse. Something had to be done before we yielded to the fascinations of this savage enchantress... Valleys lay here and there, running back from the shore with green and inviting vistas.<sup>19</sup>

Stoddard's use of Melville here is striking, and the narrator concedes soon after: "I happened to know something about this place... for Herman Melville has plucked out the heart of its mystery, and beautiful and barbarous Typee lies naked and forsaken."<sup>20</sup> Of course, having never visited the Marquesas before, Stoddard bases his attitude and writing solely upon what he knew from reading Melville. As a result, though he has traveled thousands of miles, the narrator expresses no desire to actually set foot on the islands; Melville's literary "version" is enough for this traveler, as the written *idea* of the place becomes more important for the narrator than the actual island. As Myra Jehlen argues: "the literature of colonial description... conceals the distinction between fancy and fact, fuses the ideal and the real. Visions appear realistic."<sup>21</sup> Stoddard's narrator is content to support such a romanticized vision, as he concludes: "I was rather glad we could not get any nearer to it, for fear of dispelling the ideal that has so long charmed me."<sup>22</sup> Once again, Melville and *Typee* have served as a literary touchstone for a writer traveling to the South Seas. Having simultaneously established a style, method, and descriptive tone for the region, Melville looms as both a figure whom others must acknowledge as they write their own South Sea journeys, and as an author whose writing will sometimes substitute for actual cultural interactions.

Stoddard's Marquesas passage is remarkable not only for its debt to Melville, but also for its atypical approach to the environment. Discussing the landscape of the American frontier, literary critics such as Annette Kolodny and Henry Nash Smith have examined the wilderness metaphorically. In their view, the land is a tempting, virginal, and ultimately "feminine" space to be conquered by male ex-

plorers, settlers, and developers. As a result, women within this feminized landscape become the object of male sexual advance.<sup>23</sup> There is a clear reason for such depiction of the land by colonial authors. Anne McClintock argues of colonialist writing: “The world is feminized and spatially spread for male exploration, then reassembled in the interests of massive colonial power.”<sup>24</sup> Rather than take this classic approach to the landscape, however, Stoddard avoids portraying the land as woman. Other than calling the island an enchantress — as much a reference to Classical literature as the female body — Stoddard resists gendering the landscape as a feminine space to be subdued and mastered. Instead, Stoddard casts the land as an area for imagination, travel, and repose. For this writer, the islands hold a different reason for interacting with the natives, and as a result of these homoerotic interests and desires, Stoddard simply cannot feminize the land. On the other hand, he would break all literary conventions were he to attempt to masculinize such traditionally female space, so he eschews this potential approach as well. For this narrator on what we may call a “homocolonial” journey, the land is therefore decidedly ungendered and of limited interest as an area to dominate literally. Instead, it is the native people populating the land who will attract his interest, efforts, and overtures.

Once he arrives in the South Seas, Stoddard’s unusual personal and colonial mission strongly influences all aspects of his cultural interaction. In particular, the narrator’s contact with native islanders is marked by ambiguous language and consciously paternal behavior. Austen emphasizes a pattern recurring in much of *South-Sea Idyls*:

a friendship [develops] between the narrator, an American, and a good-looking young native with whom the narrator begins to ‘chum,’ live and sleep. Stoddard gets away with all this by suggesting that the American’s interest in these ‘scamps’ and ‘scapegraces’ is that of a kindly avuncular gentleman who is interested in civilizing and Christianizing the noble scalawag.<sup>25</sup>

This particular model is manifest throughout the Tahitian adventures of Stoddard’s narrator after he arrives in the capitol of Pape’ete. The island was “discovered” in June of 1767 by British sailors under Captain Wallis searching for the Southern Continent. Captain Cook and his crew later set up camp on the island in 1769 in order to make observations of the land and people. Tahiti subsequently came under French rule and soon harbored expanded commercial development and maritime trade.<sup>26</sup> Stoddard’s “mission” was, of course, far different from that of Wallis and Cook, but his attitude towards native people belies some of his inherited colonialist bent. The story “Pearl-Hunting in the Pomotous,” for example, expresses many of the peculiar imperial undercurrents present in Stoddard’s South Sea adventures. Wishing to explore islands in the vicinity of Tahiti, the narrator embarks on the



schooner *Great Western* to visit the "Dangerous Archipelago, or... the Pomotou Islands."<sup>27</sup> After three days of heavy swells and unsuccessful searching for land, the ship comes upon a small harbor and is met by numerous natives in canoes. The *Great Western* becomes "for the time being the center of their local commerce."<sup>28</sup> Trading quickly commences in typical South Seas fashion, as the sailors exchange trinkets for fresh fruit from the island. Though a normal occurrence for Western ships in the South Pacific, the appearance of these natives in the small harbor of Motu Hilo (Crescent Island) nonetheless surprises the narrator. His description is revealing: "It was a sensation for unaccustomed eyes, that inland sea covered, littered, I might say, with wooly heads, as though a cargo of cocoanuts had been thrown overboard in a stress of weather. They gathered about us as thick as flies at a honey-pot."<sup>29</sup> The linguistic colonial Othering of the natives is particularly prominent here. The narrator imagines the natives as annoying "flies" and equates their heads with the abundant tropical coconut. Such derogatory language is often a precursor to conquering missions by Western explorers, since denigrating their physical appearance facilitates ruthless imperial incursions against "lesser" peoples.

Stoddard's narrator is not traveling to conquer this mass of islanders bellicose, however, so his colonial attention is instead drawn to one particularly receptive young islander. This "one gigantic youth," he writes, seemed "big enough to eat half our ship's crew."<sup>30</sup> Even before this young man leaves the water, the narrator begins the process of establishing an amorous relationship. His first interactions with the youth disclose his intentions. The narrator intimates: "In the midst of my alarm he began making vows of eternal friendship. This was by no means disagreeable to me... I reciprocated! I leaned over the stern-rail of the *Great Western* in the attitude of Juliet in the balcony scene, assuring the egg-boy that my heart was his if he was willing to take it at second hand."<sup>31</sup> Using Western literature as the basis for his description and placing himself in the passive, feminine role of Juliet, Stoddard reveals that his curiosity extends beyond simply trading for eggs. Quickly hereafter, a relationship in the pattern Austen describes begins: the benevolent narrator will befriend and privately "supervise" this island youth.

Though innocuous at first, the association between this youth and the narrator soon begins to mirror the colonial pattern of interaction common between Westerners and native Islanders. The narrator describes his newfound companion: "He was known as Hua Manu, or Bird's Egg. Every native in the South Sea gets named by accident."<sup>32</sup> But Hua Manu is not truly named accidentally. Naming is a key part of the colonial process as it implies and asserts ownership, and this particular native receives his name for the eggs he brings to the arriving sailors. Simply put, his value and identity are, for the Westerner, contained solely in his role as economic provider of ship's stores. Because of language barriers, Hua Manu may take

only a Western name translated to his own language; His real identity will not be known and is of no interest to visitors.<sup>33</sup> Stoddard's narrator reinforces this commercial use of Hua Manu once he learns that the *Great Western* will be in port for a few days. He shamelessly proposes to his companion: "Let's invest in a canoe, explore the lagoon for fresh oyster-beds, and fill innumerable cocoanut shells with these little white seeds. It will be both pleasant and profitable, particularly for me."<sup>34</sup> Combining his desire for profit with his longing to engage in a physical affair with Hua Manu, the narrator exalts: "He knew a spot where the oyster yawned in profusion, a secret cave for shelter, a forest garden of fruits, a never-failing spring.... Thither we would fly and domesticate ourselves."<sup>35</sup> Since "domesticate" is often the narrator's code word for homoerotic affair, he becomes doubly excited. In this arrangement, he will realize the opportunity to satisfy both his economic yearnings and his sexual lusts with a compliant native. Of course, such behavior would not have been sanctioned by American editors, readers, or critics. But Stoddard is able to skirt the gaze of a heterosexual public by his clever use of euphemistic language. Austen argues: "The generic vagueness (fiction or nonfiction) of *South-Sea Idyls* was another ploy by which Stoddard confounded the reader who might suspect some of his persona's libidinous activities. Although most of the tales were indeed based on fact, Stoddard could always claim, if need arose, that he was making the whole thing up."<sup>36</sup> John Crowley also notes the difficulty in determining just what Stoddard's audience knew, since we can only guess "[e]xactly how much of Stoddard's veiled homosexuality was visible to nineteenth-century readers."<sup>37</sup> Stoddard is nevertheless careful in his treatment of the physical relationship his narrator undertakes with Hua Manu, and the bulk of their contact is named simply as harmless tutelary "domestication" — a palatable, albeit misleading, term created for his reserved reading public.

Attendant to the narrator's physical use of the Islander is his deployment of Hua Manu for personal gain. Pearls were a valuable resource and the narrator hopes that he can procure a sizeable number of these treasures for trade or sale later. Because of the difficulty of diving for pearls, the narrator is unable to do the searching himself, however. The arduous work of recovering oysters will fall to the amenable Hua Manu. From his seat in their canoe, the narrator explains the dangerous process of underwater pearl hunting his companion undertakes:

How he struggled to get down to the gaping oysters, literally climbing down head first! I saw his dark form struggling with the forces that strove to force him back to the surface, crowding him out into the air again. He seized one of the shells, but it shut immediately, and he tugged and jerked and wrenched at it like a young demon until it gave way, when he struck out and up for the air. All this seemed an age to me.... Reaching the canoe, he dropped the great, ugly-looking thing into it, and hung over the outrigger gasping for breath like a

man half hanged. He was pale about the mouth, his eyes were suffused with blood, blood oozed from his ears and nostrils; his limbs, gashed with the sharp corals, bled also. The veins of his forehead looked ready to burst.<sup>38</sup>

Witnessing the exhausted condition of his companion, the narrator pleads: "I urged him to desist, seeing his condition and fearing a repetition of his first experience; but he would go once more... he wanted to get me a pearl."<sup>39</sup> The native's "devotion" to this Westerner and his consuming desire for valuable pearls nearly kills Hua Manu. Like naming, casting the non-Westerner as subordinate, simple, and eager to please both justifies colonial exploitation and elevates the status of the Westerner. Vicente Rafael calls this "tutelage" aspect of colonialism "making native inhabitants desire what colonial authority desired for them."<sup>40</sup> Clearly, the narrator has made Hua Manu into his compliant charge, willing to endanger himself for his Western companion's gain.

Before the pearl-hunting can proceed further, the sea around them turns rough, and the two realize they must escape the archipelago and abandon their quest for riches. Though they successfully flee their lagoon and nearly effect their passage to calmer seas, a reef cuts their canoe to "slivers" and leaves the narrator struggling perilously in the water. As an islander, Hua Manu is a naturally gifted swimmer, and it is he who saves the narrator from certain drowning. Because of his size and skill, Hua Manu is able to support the narrator, who cannot swim, on his back and keep him afloat. The narrator describes the unusual rescue: "I found Hua leisurely feeling his way through the water, perfectly self possessed and apparently unconscious that he had a deck passenger nearly as big as himself... I could rest my chin upon my arms and thus easily keep my mouth above water most of the time."<sup>41</sup> Once a source of physical pleasure and provider of wealth, Hua Manu now takes on the role of human life preserver. After hours of floating in this fashion, the two eventually find a small strip of land that "was as smooth and shiny and desolate as anybody's bald head."<sup>42</sup> Exposed to the vicious elements and deprived of food or water, the two wait desperately for days, hoping that the *Great Western* might sight them on its return to Tahiti. Unable to maintain his physical and mental faculty beyond a few days in this harsh and foreign environment, the narrator deteriorates rapidly. He finds himself in "oblivious intervals" of "suspended animation" while "consumed with thirst [and] speechless with hunger."<sup>43</sup> In a turn on the typical colonial scheme of the Westerner in power, Stoddard's narrator plays the passive role, succumbing to this hostile climate. Hua Manu, on the other hand, remains physically capable and vigilantly "on the lookout."<sup>44</sup> In the throes of his anguish, the narrator hallucinates, explaining: "[I felt] someone gathering me in his arms... like an infant I lay in the embrace of my deliverer, who moistened my parched lips and burning throat with delicious and copious

draughts. It was an elixir of life; I drank health and strength in every drop... and sank into a deep and dreamless sleep."<sup>45</sup>

The narrator awakens some time later — hours, or, perhaps, days — to find himself being nursed to health aboard the *Great Western*. These rescuing sailors recount how the ship found the narrator and Hua Manu on their atoll, while the narrator imagines the scene: "I must have asked for a drink. He gave it to me from an artery in his wrist, severed by the finest teeth you ever saw. That's what saved me. On came the little schooner, beating up against the wind and tide, while I had my lips sealed to the fountain of life."<sup>46</sup> Put simply, Hua Manu saved the narrator's life. But the method of lifesaving is important for examination of the link between colonialism and homosexuality. In sucking blood from his companion, the narrator is, in many ways, operating as a sort of South Sea vampire. Howard Malchow argues that "the overt sexuality of the vampire story has always been obvious with the exchange of blood as metaphor for sexual intercourse."<sup>47</sup> Since Stoddard cannot overtly state the nature of his sexual relationship with Hua Manu, deployment of the vampire motif is a subversive means of expressing homosexuality. A repressed nineteenth-century culture that shunned discussion of sexuality stands as the reason for this metaphorical mode. Christopher Craft provides an interpretive cultural framework for Stoddard's tale, arguing that because of "Victorian culture's anxiety about desire's potential indifference to the prescriptions of gender... the heterosexual norm repeats itself in a mediating image of femininity — that displaces a more direct communion among males."<sup>48</sup> Because theirs was a homoerotic affair, "mediating images of femininity" are deployed to express the sexual relationship between the narrator and Hua Manu. For example, the narrator says that he lay "like an infant" in Hua Manu's arms, and was supplied with "an elixir of life" before he fell asleep. The scene echoes a mother nursing a child, not a man satisfying his homosexual lover. This intervening femininity also softens the narrator's actions since he circumvents the aggressive position of vampire. Rather than violently biting into Hua Manu's neck, the narrator is instead offered a wrist vein severed by his companion's own teeth. Though colonial sexuality and economic exploitation are in many ways akin to a vampire taking a victim's blood, such conspicuous connections are made more palatable to the audience through the passivity of both the vampire/narrator and Hua Manu.

Since the colonial mission is marked as much by sexual exploitation as economic gain, there is an undeniable link between the narrator's behavior and colonialism in "Pearl-Hunting." Though obviously grateful for Hua Manu's efforts, the narrator reflects with a condescending and blurred colonial eye:

I lived to tell the tale. I should think it mighty mean of me not to live after such a sacrifice. Hua Manu sank rapidly. I must have nearly drained his veins, but

I don't believe he regretted it. The captain said that when he was dying, his faithful eyes were fixed on me. Unconsciously, I moved a little; he smiled, and the soul went out of him, *perfectly satisfied*. [my italics]<sup>49</sup>

Clearly unable to accept that his own desire for profitable pearls caused Hua Manu's death, the narrator casts him as a stereotypical faithful savage ready to die happily for a white man. The narrator does not absorb the lesson in self-sacrifice or the corrupting greed of his quest for wealth, however, as he reflects: "I wondered if a whole cargo of pearls could make me indifferent to his loss."<sup>50</sup> Having literally sucked the blood from a native islander, the colonizing narrator turns again to economic terms to quantify his loss. As a result, neither Stoddard, nor his reading public, could be highly critical of the narrator's behavior or the boy's fate in "Pearl-Hunting." Far easier than considering the economic exploitation wrought upon Pacific Islanders by Euro-American commercial interests is casting this exhausting colonial relationship as one of noble master and faithful slave or lustful vampire and compliant victim. Edward Said offers an interesting explanation: "In your narratives, histories, travel tales, and explorations your consciousness was represented as the principal authority, an active point of energy that made sense not just of colonizing activities, but of exotic geographies and peoples."<sup>51</sup> Said refers here to British and French activities during the middle and late nineteenth century in India and North Africa, but his principle applies to Stoddard's writing during the time period as well. Even in a state of suspended consciousness, Stoddard's narrator attempts to maintain his own superiority over a native, and through Hua Manu's behavior, his readers could reduce their relationship, and that of all colonizing activities, to that of rightful Western dominance and tacit Native submission.

Use of the vampire as metaphorical agent of colonialism complicates other aspects of the colonial paradigm as well. In discussing Melville's *Typee* and Twain's *Letters from Hawaii*, I have argued for cannibalism as a trope used to cast a racially different group as savage and Other for imperial aims. In "Pearl-Hunting," the trope is curiously and consciously reversed. Malchow argues that the "aspect... of the black savage that most closely relates to the gothic unnatural is his presumed cannibal impulse."<sup>52</sup> Because cannibalism has been connected to the Other — the *Typee* or the Hawaiian — it stands then as a way of implying racial difference.<sup>53</sup> The attendant connection between cannibalism and vampirism is clarified by Malchow: "The savage cannibal and the gothic vampire, a species of cannibal, have much in common. Their sharp teeth and bloody mouths signify an uncontrollable hunger infused with a deviant sexual sadism."<sup>54</sup> By consuming the blood of his victim, Stoddard's narrator not only adopts the role of vampire, but of cannibal as well — surviving on the body of the "savage" native. Why would a

Westerner take on the despised role of cannibal? One reason might be Stoddard's own reorienting of the colonial mode. Since cannibalism was almost exclusively documented as heterosexual men eating men, Stoddard's homosexuality recasts this model, instead using his vampiric cannibalism to mediate and express homosexual colonial desire. Because the cannibal wishes power over his consumed victim, the fatal result of this altered cannibalism is unchanged, however, so that capitalism, cannibalism, and homosexuality converge in a culturally convenient fashion in the story. The death of Hua Manu foregrounds these colonial connections, and the narrator escapes unharmed, able to claim simply that "it was all a dream," while his victim lies dead and voiceless, always a loyal victim/worker, and unable to implicate the cannibal narrator. Never directly named as vampire, cannibal, or homosexual, the narrator flirts with, but does not take on the role of Other in "Pearl-Hunting," thus enabling Stoddard's culture to remain ambivalent towards this multifaceted "deviant."

While the homoerotic relationship between the narrator and Hua Manu in "Pearl-Hunting" is subtle — expressed only euphemistically as "domesticating" and metaphorically as "blood sucking" — the story "Joe of Lahaina" raises the culturally dangerous specter of a nineteenth-century homoerotic relationship much more overtly, as we see Stoddard's narrator in a less-veiled encounter with a native boy in the Hawaiian Islands.<sup>55</sup> In this tale, exotic adventure and Gothic conventions could not fully obfuscate what was happening between Stoddard and his native companion. Calling Lahaina "a little slice of civilization, beached on a shore of barbarism,"<sup>56</sup> the narrator explains his chance meeting with a young native known as "Joe":

[W]hen a lot of us were bathing in the moonlight, I saw a figure so fresh and joyous that I began to realize how the old Greeks could worship mere physical beauty and forget its higher forms. Then I discovered that face on a body — a rare enough combination — and the whole constituted Joe.... I gave bonds for Joe's irreproachable conduct while with me.<sup>57</sup>

As a member of polite society, the narrator must, of course, explain his decision to look after a young male. But his physical attraction to the boy — though couched in the language of ancient art — is quite clear in this passage. While accounting for the boy's conduct to the Islanders, the narrator also defends his motives to his reading public. He explains: "I wanted... to instill into his youthful mind those counsels which, if rigorously followed, must result in his becoming a true and unterrified American... This compact settled... down we marched to my villa, and began housekeeping in good earnest."<sup>58</sup> One expressed motive for their companionship is palatable to readers: the narrator will make the boy an "American" — clearly the goal of any "good" citizen of the United States traveling

abroad. The narrator's second motive is not so easily explained. Of course, the narrator could not admit to a nineteenth-century reading public that he was having an affair with this boy, so their homoerotic relationship is politely — and vaguely — described as "housekeeping."<sup>59</sup> The narrator writes of such "housekeeping": "Joe would utter a sort of unanimous yes, with his whole body and soul... we would take a drink of cocoa-milk, and finish our bananas, and go to bed because we had nothing else to do."<sup>60</sup> Like any colonizer, the narrator relies upon the language of possession, and in presenting this sexual relationship, he explains: "Joe was my pet elephant, and I was obliged to play with him very cautiously."<sup>61</sup> Anne McClintock notes the "long tradition of male travel as an erotics of ravishment" that is visible in many accounts of colonial encounters with non-European peoples.<sup>62</sup> Stoddard's narrator works within a homoerotic variation of this stereotypical colonial paradigm and has therefore adopted a homocolonial mode of travel writing. Finding a native of a different race who is young, naïve, and open to his advances, the narrator can exhibit behavior in which he could not participate openly in Western culture. This exotic locale, coupled with this native youth, provides the colonizing narrator with the means for self-fulfillment, and he therefore operates comfortably within this slightly altered colonial model.

But for all his carefully shrewd descriptions of his activities, Stoddard is nevertheless presenting a narrator throughout *South-Sea Idyls* who is engaging in homoerotic activity during the 1870s. Such behavior was clearly held in disdain during the time period in which *South-Sea Idyls*, in its various editions, was published. Austen notes that sex between males was considered perverse during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so "sexual perversion was hardly regarded as a fit subject for fiction."<sup>63</sup> Moreover, in America, gay men were called "defective, insane, or criminal as late as 1918."<sup>64</sup> How, then, could such shocking behavior in a work of literature have escaped the attention of publishers, critics, and the reading public? A few explanations are possible. One is that Stoddard was particularly aware of the difficulties he faced as a gay writer and was therefore careful in his presentations.<sup>65</sup> For example, homoerotic relationships are referred to as "housekeeping" or "domesticating" throughout the *South-Sea Idyls*. As Austen explains: "The combined innocence and ignorance of nineteenth-century readers was a key factor [in their failure to acknowledge the homosexuality], or course, but another was Stoddard's half-shrewd, half-bumbling technique of constructing sentences and paragraphs so as to cover his tracks with confusion."<sup>66</sup> Naturally, most readers would have been loath to believe that Stoddard's narrator was engaged in "perverse" acts with native boys, so they accepted his obfuscating technique and ignored textual clues. A positive review from the conservative *Catholic Review* in 1892 reinforces such naiveté, and Crowley surmises: "[t]he critical consensus was that *South Sea-Idyls* was a delightful example of 'California Hu-

mor.”<sup>67</sup> As a result, this “bumbling” narrator was allied with Mark Twain and other California writers who were viewed as quick-witted, humorous, and adventurous.<sup>68</sup> Still, even though they seemed to ignore the possibility of homoeroticism in *South-Sea Idyls*, American readers were not completely naïve about homosocial relations between men in literature. In 1848, James Fenimore Cooper published *Jack Tier*, a seafaring tale that outlines a homoerotic relationship between two men aboard a sailing vessel. Before the possibility of overt homoerotics could be confronted, however, Cooper reveals one of the men to be the other’s wife in disguise and the heterosexual couple is reunited.<sup>69</sup> Of course, close relationships between men at sea were not completely unacknowledged. For instance, critics have noted the strong bonds between men aboard the Pequod in Melville’s *Moby-Dick* and elsewhere in Melville’s sea fiction.<sup>70</sup> Stoddard’s behavior while at sea was hardly unusual, then, and close camaraderie among men would not have surprised his late-nineteenth-century readers. Stoddard is not as cunning as Cooper in his plot construction, but he also does not deny the existence of a homosexual relationship as Cooper did. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick raises an important point about the expression of homosexuality:

‘Closetedness’ itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of silence — not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularly by fits and starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it. The speech acts that coming out, in turn, can compromise are a strangely specific. And they may have nothing to do with the acquisition of new information.<sup>71</sup>

If Stoddard’s flair for words is a way to remain “in the closet,” his words are also a form of “coming out” and announcing his homosexuality to those who will listen. Presented to an unreceptive audience, however, such a revealing act is consciously or unconsciously ignored. Instead, the force of expressing such behavior falls to Stoddard and his narrator only; readers remain obtusely unaware, content to revel in Stoddard’s South Sea colonial adventures. Moreover, Joe’s ultimate denouement may also explain how the narrator’s behavior, not only in “Joe of Lahaina,” but throughout *South-Sea Idyls*, was countenanced by the American public.

Another recurring textual theme beyond the basic “narrator fraternizes with a young native” pattern is the deleterious effect the narrator has on the native Object. Such an outcome is visible in “Pearl-Hunting,” where Hua Manu gives his life to save the narrator, and recurs in Part II of “Joe of Lahaina.” After abandoning Joe when he left the Hawaiian Islands, the forlorn narrator returns to search unsuccessfully for his lost companion. Months later, while “wandering here and there among the islands,” the narrator “heard of an opportunity to visit Molokai — an island seldom visited by the tourist — where, perhaps, [he] could get a view of a



singularly sad and interesting colony of lepers."<sup>72</sup> Known for the horrors faced by its condemned inhabitants, the colony was little chronicled by Western writers, and the narrator's description of the suffering lepers is arresting and informative. He warns his readers:

see the horrors, hardly to be recognized as human, that grope about you; listen in vain for the voices that have been hushed forever by decay; breathe the tainted atmosphere; and bear ever in mind that, while they hover about you — forbidden to touch you, yet longing to clasp once more a hand that is perfect and pure — the insidious seeds of the malady may be generating in your vitals.<sup>73</sup>

Stoddard was aware of the dangers awaiting a foreign visitor to Molokai, and in this second-person passage, caution is passed along to his unknowing readers.<sup>74</sup> Like Jack London some thirty-five years later,<sup>75</sup> Stoddard creates a compelling picture of the everyday horrors faced by those banished to the island. But there are deeper links between Stoddard's behavior and his treatment of leprosy. He notes that the lepers are "forbidden to touch" non-lepers and warns of "the insidious seeds of the malady." Part of what Jerome Buckley has deemed "Victorian Decadence" is marked "by a conscious will to explore the dark underside of experience... [and] a lingering glance at sinful pleasures."<sup>76</sup> As an unusual exploration, Stoddard's visit to the Molokai colony is a conscious look at the "underside" of Western colonialism and, as a result, he is exposed to an unfamiliar world. In this tourist-like visit to the leper colony, the narrator encounters personal knowledge well beyond initiation into the effects of a debilitating disease, however. He explains: "the keeper entered and told me how I had a friend out there who wished to speak with me — some one who had seen me somewhere."<sup>77</sup> The narrator describes the person he meets: "There was a face I could not have recognized as anything friendly or human. Knots of flesh stood out upon it; scar upon scar disfigured it.... The outline of a youthful figure was preserved, but the hands and feet were pitiful to look at."<sup>78</sup> Unable to recognize this leper, the narrator must be told that the boy is "his little, unfortunate 'Joe.'" The two talk between a separating fence and walk on the beach a few feet apart, reminiscing about their previous time together. Of course, their physical relationship cannot continue, so the narrator wishes to leave the pathetic but uncomfortable situation as quickly as possible. Moreover, the narrator hopes to avoid any prolonged, distressing farewell. He explains his decision: "In leaving the leper village, I had concluded to say nothing to Joe, other than the usual 'aloha' at night, when I could ride off into the darkness";<sup>79</sup> and concludes: "I shall never see little Joe again, with his pitiful face, growing gradually as dreadful as a cobra's, and almost as fascinating in its hideousness.... I knew he would be looking for me to say *Good-night*. But he did not

find me; and he will never again find me in this life, for I left him sitting in the dark door of his sepulcher — sitting and singing in the mouth of his grave — clothed all in Death.”<sup>80</sup> Here is a much deeper revelation of the powerful link between leprosy and colonialism than, for example, Twain provides in his “Sandwich Islands Lecture.” By abandoning his former lover and companion, Stoddard’s narrator reinforces the ascendancy of Western colonialism which uses natives as disposable commodities. Sneaking away at night, the narrator, and the American reading public, can avoid confronting the damage and disease wrought by their colonial incursions into the islands.

But Joe’s impending death at Molokai has deeper ramifications if we consider his relationship with Stoddard’s narrator under the light of homoeroticism and colonialism.<sup>81</sup> Discussing the construction of gender in nineteenth-century America, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg writes: “Both through literal body language and through physical metaphor and image, the body provides a symbolic system through which individuals can discuss social realities too complex and conflicted to be spoken overtly. Social, not sexual, disorder, lies at the heart of this discourse.”<sup>82</sup> This critical assertion is significant, for it highlights the social aspect both of Stoddard’s text and his sexual behavior as a nineteenth-century homosexual male. Craft has identified in the Gothic an “analogy between monstrosity and sexual desire” and claims that “under the defensive mask of monstrosity,” we may find the “psychological ambivalence [desire and fear]” that drives “representation of desire.”<sup>83</sup> Craft also finds a “schematic formal management of narrative material” in Gothic texts such as *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, where the text “invites or admits a monster, then entertains or is entertained by monstrosity... until in its closing pages it expels or repudiates the monster and all the disruption that he/she/it brings.”<sup>84</sup> If we consider Hua Manu, whom the narrator describes as “big enough to eat half our ship’s crew,” and Joe, who is marked by “knots of flesh” and “scar upon scar,” the link between leprosy and the Gothic becomes clearer. In both “Pearl-Hunting” and “Joe of Lahaina,” the “monstrous” figure amuses and sustains the narrator, but is expelled by the end of the story as an unacceptable companion, leaving the narrator to continue his travels unencumbered. Allowing the Other to continue existing — whether leper, vampire, or cannibal — is impossible, so race is deployed as a tacit means of identifying the “monster,” thereby keeping it out of Western society when its usefulness has passed. Stoddard’s narrator and his Western culture have clearly taken significantly from Joe and his people, and this colonial intrusion is thematically justified on the basis of race. McClintock explains that “imperialism and the invention of race were fundamental aspects of Western, industrial society,”<sup>85</sup> and within this culture, Stoddard was an unorthodox mirror. Able to make an unusual tour of the South Seas, he was not unique, because like Cook or Porter, he inflicted a terrible fate upon the *body* of the racially different person he conquered.

The atypical, indirect means by which Stoddard's narrator colonizes his victims further highlights connections between homoeroticism and colonialism manifest within *South-Sea Idyls*. Sedgwick claims that "an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition."<sup>86</sup> If we agree, too, that "sexual ideology reflected the institutional and political organization of society at the same time that it helped shape sexual behavior,"<sup>87</sup> and that "Stoddard was a lover of men at the historical moment when 'homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality' were being constructed,"<sup>88</sup> then we can clearly connect Stoddard's narrator to the American colonial project. Smith-Rosenberg claims that in late-nineteenth-century America, psychiatrists came to "think of both homosexuality and latent homosexuality as states totally different from heterosexuality"; and continues: "With this rapidly dichotomous model of assumption, 'latent homosexuality' becomes the indication of disease in progress — seeds of a pathology which belies the reality of an individual's heterosexuality."<sup>89</sup> In "Joe of Lahaina," two "diseased" characters, then, are offered to the American reading public. Both are homosexual, but the gay, racial Other is the doubly diseased character, and it is he, not the narrator, who is infected with leprosy and dies. While I am not suggesting that homosexuality is an illness, if we view the narrator's behavior as "diseased" in the minds of Victorian American readers, then we can understand the colonial efficiency of Joe's death.<sup>90</sup> On one level, he is first a victim of colonial expansion and the subsequent demise caused by leprosy. More importantly, however, his body — decayed and dying — becomes the scapegoat through which American culture can defend itself and its actions abroad. Stoddard may, in fact, tap into the American belief system of the period that labels homosexuality as a disease and gays as social lepers. Moreover, America as represented by Stoddard is itself "diseased," but through the sacrifice of homosexual and racialized Joe to leprosy, Stoddard's narrator, and America itself, are purged of their imperial transgressions. The American narrator survives to continue his adventures, while Joe of Lahaina, and Hua Manu before him, die tragically as colonial victims.

The link between homoeroticism, colonialism, and economics reaches a pinnacle in the collection's best-known story, "Chumming with a Savage." Here, the narrator replicates his pattern of engaging in a homoerotic affair with a young native, bringing the boy to America, and precipitating the boy's death.<sup>91</sup> Through the narrator's repetition of his own colonial paradigm, a victim of Western imperialism is again exploited for American readers. Part I of this three part story is set in Hawaii. Left to explore a valley by his companion who "thought otherwise of [his] intentions," the narrator says: "I was quite alone with two hundred dusky fellows, only two of whom could speak a syllable of English, and I the sole representative

of the *superior white* within twenty miles [my italics].”<sup>92</sup> After this companion leaves him for a few days, the narrator meets the next of his native love objects, Kána-aná. He writes of this sixteen-year-old boy: “I saw a round, full, rather girlish face; lips ripe and expressive, not quite so sensual as those of most of his race; not a bad nose, by any means; eyes perfectly glorious — regular almonds — with the mythical lashes ‘that sweep,’ etc., etc.”<sup>93</sup> The narrator’s description of the lips, eyes, and lashes of the islander relies so much on stereotypes that he can comfortably end his incomplete portrayal with “etc.” and know that his Western readers will understand what he has not actually said. Finding the boy attractive, the narrator quickly initiates intimate contact and writes excitedly: “he placed his two hands on my knees, and declared, ‘I was his best friend, and he was mine; I must come at once to his house, and there live always with him.’ What could I do but go?... This was our little plan — an entirely private arrangement between Kána-aná and myself.”<sup>94</sup> Their acquaintance promptly becomes affectionate, and the narrator revels in his newfound companion, intimating: “I was taken in, fed, and petted in every possible way, and finally put to bed, where Kána-aná monopolized me, growling in true savage fashion if anyone came near me. I didn’t sleep much, after all. I must have been excited.”<sup>95</sup> This evasive language — “put to bed,” “didn’t sleep much,” “must have been excited” — clearly indicates the homoerotic nature of the narrator’s relationship with Kána-aná. But conservative readers of *South-Sea Idyls* seemed not to object to such unusual and often condemned sexual behavior. How is it that Stoddard was able to publish such a piece of writing to positive reviews in late-nineteenth-century America?

An overwhelming reason for the general acceptance of the homosexuality in *South-Sea Idyls* — or, at least, the lack of outright dismissal of the collection — is the setting of the stories. Austen offers a viable explanation: “As long as the scenario remained outdoors, there was a certain fresh-air freedom for writers of a century ago to tell of the attractiveness of a male as seen through the eyes of another male.”<sup>96</sup> Such “bonding” between male characters in the outdoors was hardly uncommon in American fiction. One needs only to think of Huck and Jim lounging idly together on a raft, or Ishmael and Queequeg sharing a sailor’s bed. Even into the twentieth century, Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* relies on the homosocial link between Jake Barnes and Bill Gorton as they fish, sleep, and dine outdoors by the Irati River in Spain. But along with accepting what Leslie Fiedler calls “innocent homosexuality” in American fiction,<sup>97</sup> American readers and critics have also chosen to ignore the behavior of Stoddard’s narrator, even during the late twentieth century. Walker started this pattern of elision by writing discreetly of Stoddard: “Charlie was obviously not the marrying kind.”<sup>98</sup> Van Wyck Brooks discusses Stoddard in *The Times of Melville and Whitman* but limits his commentary to platitudes such as “he loved the dreamy days of calm in the flowering equatorial

waters [and]...he never tired of the winding roads."<sup>99</sup> At no point does Brooks concede or assess the homoerotic behavior of Stoddard and his narrator. Even in 1977, Robert L. Gale claims in a biography of Stoddard: "What Stoddard writes in *South-Sea Idyls* is less important than how he says it"; while focusing on the "fine rhythm" and "poetic tone" of Stoddard's language.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, some critics and readers have certainly been aware of what Stoddard was doing in the South Seas. Crowley notes that "[Ambrose] Bierce once twitted Stoddard for going to the islands to have love affairs with 'nigger' boys."<sup>101</sup> But as a close confidant of Stoddard, Bierce had the knowledge and the opportunity to critique Stoddard privately. Most readers, seeing the collection as a wonderful example of outdoor bonding between men, or "California Humor," chose to accept Stoddard's behavior as merely "quirky" instead of acknowledging his subversive homosexuality. Perhaps such intentional readings and conscious ignorance allowed readers to maintain a forced innocence without having to confront the effects of American colonialism. For if readers truly interpreted Stoddard's stories as literal colonial accounts of gay seduction and imperial abandonment, then reaction would certainly have been stronger and more condemning.

The intimate island affair between the narrator and Kána-aná ends rather quickly, however, and the narrator once again steals away, abandoning Kána-aná on his island. But this does not end their relationship, and upon returning home to San Francisco, the narrator writes:

When people began asking me queer questions about my chum Kána-aná, some of them even hinting that 'he might possibly have been a girl all the time,' I resolved to send down for him, and settle the matter at once. I knew he was not a girl and I thought I should like to show him some American hospitality, and perhaps convert him before I sent him back again.<sup>102</sup>

Apparently unaware of the narrator's homosexuality, American friends question the gender of his companion, assuming such a beautifully described youth must be female. But the narrator will convince these doubters of Kána-aná's gender. His plan is simple, as he explains: "So I wrote to the Colonel of the Royal Guards... begging him to catch Kána-aná, when his folks weren't looking, and send him to my address, marked C.O.D., for I was just dying to see him."<sup>103</sup> Treating Kána-aná more like a package than a person, the narrator assumes that a military force can simply find and ship what he desires as part of a Pacific marketplace — the language echoes that of the Atlantic slave trade. The narrator's actions underscore Wai-Chee Dimock's assertion: "the marketplace is everywhere and nowhere, ubiquitous and invisible. Under its shadow, even the most private affairs take on the essence of business transactions, for the realm of human relations is fully contained within an all-encompassing business ethic."<sup>104</sup> Once Kána-aná is

“procured,” the two spend a few days “chumming” together in San Francisco. Within days, however, the narrator tires of the “little dark-skinned savage.”<sup>105</sup> Moreover, as time passes, Kána-aná too grows weary of California, becoming “silent and melancholy.”<sup>106</sup> Crowley notes Kána-Aná’s “linguistic otherness, which precludes the possibility of non-trivial conversation and the articulation of anything more than a desire to please.”<sup>107</sup> Because the narrator is the sole “voice” in the text, he does not immediately recognize Kána-aná’s desire to return to the tropics and behaves unsympathetically for days. Finally understanding that the Islander’s sole desire is not simply to please his companion, the narrator admits his mistake: “Poor longing soul! I would you had never left the life best suited to you — that liberty which alone could give expression to your wonderful capacities.”<sup>108</sup> With realization of his error, the narrator quickly resolves to send his companion back to his island home, freeing him from the grasp of Western culture.

The narrator’s bold and erroneous decision to bring Kána-aná to America is not easily rectified, and his companion is unable to return peacefully to life on his island. In Part III of “Chumming with a Savage,” we learn what became of Kána-aná after the narrator sent him back to the South Seas. The narrator discovers the boy’s fate from Kána-aná’s distraught mother. Upon first arriving back on the island, he rejoiced at “finding home so pleasant.”<sup>109</sup> This happiness faded quickly, however, and “his exhilaration wore off... [leading to] A restlessness; and undefined, unsatisfied longing [where] [l]ife became a burden.”<sup>110</sup> The narrator delineates what eventually transpired: “One day, when his condition had become no longer endurable, he stole off to sea in his canoe, thinking, perhaps, that he could reach this continent.”<sup>111</sup> Kána-aná could not paddle thousands of miles, and his body washes back to shore in the canoe days later. The story of the pair and the tragic ending that befalls Kána-aná is a case study in imperial behavior. The narrator found a young boy, had him brought to America, and helped him to become enamored of both himself and the United States, only to send him back to his island. Moreover, like a true colonizer, the narrator never fully realizes the scope of the destruction he has wrought. The end of “Chumming with a Savage” still finds the narrator falling back on the faithful savage trope to justify his actions. He tells readers with a certain pride: “Over and over, they assured me of his fidelity to me, his white brother, adding that Kána-aná had, more than once, expressed the deepest regret at not having brought me back with him.”<sup>112</sup> At no point does the narrator critique his own flippant behavior towards the boy, so that once again, an island boy is dead and the narrator lives to find another object for his interest. Though there are some humorous barbs at civilization in the text, such as his comment that “it is one of the Thirty-nine Articles of Civilization to bully one’s way through the world,”<sup>113</sup> “Chumming with a Savage” is only nominal in its criticism of colonizing. Moreover, the death of an islander would hardly have riled undiscerning

American readers. His dark skin and "uncivilized" ways seem to render him as another acceptable sacrifice to American colonialism, and neither the narrator, nor the reading public, mourns the loss of this island youth.

Though I have examined only a representative selection of the stories that make up *South-Sea Idyls*, those chosen highlight the dominant pattern of colonialism and homoeroticism that permeates the text. Stoddard and his narrator are hardly conquerors in the traditional sense, but through a blueprint of sexual exploitation and abandonment, a colonial fate of subjugation is foisted upon many native islanders. That these boys were not seen as victims by the American public is not surprising given the collection's appearance is late-nineteenth-century America, where racist attitudes towards any dark-skinned peoples persisted after the Civil War. But the apparent tolerance of a strong homosocial relationship in a Victorian period of sexual conservatism is not so easily explained. As I have suggested, ignorance might be one reason. During the late nineteenth century, the term "homosexuality" was not clearly defined or identified and a real fear of homosexuality had not yet developed in the United States.<sup>114</sup> As a result, many readers simply might not have imagined that there was more than innocent tutelage in the narrator's practice of "housekeeping." But beyond merely casting readers as naïve lies another possibility. Because the narrator's affairs were carried out with dark-skinned foreigners, the nature of his sexual exploitation was ignored and even tolerated. While some readers and critics may simply have been unable to understand Stoddard's sexual proclivities, many must have been aware. Sedgwick argues that "the language of sexuality not only intersects with, but transforms the other languages and relations by which we know."<sup>115</sup> Readers did not acknowledge, complain, or attempt to censor Stoddard's authorial homosexuality because the object of these relations was an Other, and authority in all its forms was part of the colonial project. If readers could overlook the sexual promiscuity aboard the *Dolly* in *Typee*, certainly they could tolerate a few exploited native boys in the South Seas. In this sense, Stoddard has redefined the colonial sexual mode from a homosexual perspective. Moreover, as many imperial texts will attest to, colonizing relied upon sexual domination as both a central tenet and a means of perpetuating power. Chandra Mohanty clarifies: "Sexual encounters between white men and native women often took the form of rape. This racialized, violent masculinity was in fact the underside of the sanctioned mode of colonial rule."<sup>116</sup> Stoddard's text provides a missing component of this aspect of colonial power: sexual domination of males. By controlling young men as lover, vampire, and cannibal, Stoddard's narrator leaves behind decayed and deformed bodies transformed from their original "fresh and joyous" form. The reason for the change in the colonial paradigm is literally and metaphorically cultural. In a nineteenth century that repressed discussion of sexuality, particularly between men, the object of the

homosexual gaze is disfigured and ultimately killed, preserving a hegemonic heterosexual order. Through his transformation of homosexuality into an element of colonialism, Stoddard's *South-Sea Idyls* helps not only to reinforce imperial incursions through literature, but also to expand the scope of colonial power in the American imagination.

However naïve, ignorant, or accepting of *South-Sea Idyls* American may have been, the brazen homosexuality in the text eventually cast it into obscurity. Moreover, because of the apparently unspoken realization by some readers and critics in the early twentieth century that Stoddard had written gay fiction, the last part of his career was marked by a decline in his personal and public life. Though the "luck" Howells hoped for Stoddard was never fully realized, Stoddard did leave a literary legacy. In her autobiography *Earth Horizon*, Mary Austin reflected on her time spent after the turn of the century with well-known writers such as Jack London and George Sterling in Carmel: "There was a figure of tossed-back hair and long fingers forever busy with a cigarette, Charles Warren Stoddard, bridging the Bret Harte period to ours."<sup>117</sup> This "bridge" is even more important when we consider Stoddard's connection with and influence upon other writers. For example, it was through reading *South-Sea Idyls* and speaking with Stoddard that Robert Louis Stevenson was introduced to the South Seas. Stevenson subsequently spent almost five years of his life in the Pacific and wrote extensively about his adventures.<sup>118</sup> In addition, Stoddard enjoyed a close and complicated relationship with Jack London. In a 1903 letter, London expressed Stoddard's profound personal and professional influence, addressing him as: "dear Dad (and in parenthesis let me say for your private ear that I never had a dad, never knew one, though most of the world thinks otherwise)."<sup>119</sup> London also wrote lovingly of Stoddard's books: "And did I indeed fail to acknowledge 'Island of Tranquil Delights?' It reposes on my table in honored place, and I scarcely need tell you the delight it has given me."<sup>120</sup> Stoddard's life was always one of change, as evidenced, for example, by his conversion to Catholicism in 1886.<sup>121</sup> But as his life came to a close, Stoddard was in much greater turmoil, and by the twentieth century he never received more than passing literary recognition. Though clearly a part of the American literary tradition and a central member of American authorial society, Stoddard was left nearly anonymous and penniless at his death. His career seemed to follow the path of American expansion abroad, since he was abandoned as the American colonial project waned. Though a few critics in the mid-twentieth century have applied what Austen calls "the grand old American custom for homosexual writers to undergo curious transformations... [where] [l]iterary historians and critics and biographers set to work heterosexualizing or at least neutering these writers for posterity,"<sup>122</sup> most critics simply allowed Stoddard's work to fall from the literary landscape. For Stoddard, whose best and most influential work was inseparable



from his sexual identity, such a process essentially erased him from the American literary map until critics and readers emerged in the late-twentieth century who were able to discuss his sexuality alongside his writing.<sup>123</sup> His rendering of the leper in fiction would, however, come to influence the path of his protégé, Jack London, as he sailed for the South Pacific.

## NOTES

1. Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 14.
2. George Wharton James, "Charles Warren Stoddard," *National Magazine* (1911), reprinted in *California Scrapbook: A Collection of Articles* (Los Angeles: Kovach, 1945), 659-672.
3. Roger Austen, *Genteel Pagan: The Double Life of Charles Warren Stoddard*, ed. John W. Crowley (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991). After Austen's death in 1984, Crowley edited the manuscript of *Genteel Pagan* and arranged for its publication. Crowley's introduction to the text explains the circumstances surrounding the writing of the book.
4. Patrick D. Morrow explains: "For all the advertising and promotion of this anthology, editor Harte nonetheless found the vast number of submissions far from ideal. After eliminating obvious plagiarisms and rhymed acrostics for patent medicines, Harte had to sort through an avalanche of essentially two types of poetry: talentless imitations of late Augustan picturesque verse in a California setting, or high-sounding Victorian verse of general truths, general sentiments, and predictable rhymes. As editor, Harte was too close to the situation and his deadline to realize that these poems were not material for an anthology, but rather convincing evidence that traditional, literary statements of high purpose and seriousness would mutate into comedy when confronted with California as subject matter. Reluctantly, Harte decided to publish the Victorian group." Patrick D. Morrow, "Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and the San Francisco Circle" in "Literary History of the American West." <http://www2.tcu.edu/depts/prs/amwest/html/wl0339.html> A more detailed discussion of the publication and reception of *Outcroppings* can be found in George R. Stewart, Jr., *Bret Harte: Argonaut and Exile* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 129-154.
5. Morrow, "Literary History."
6. Austen, *Genteel*, 33.
7. Austen, *Genteel*, 48.
8. A brief but informative biographical sketch of Stoddard's life in California can be found in Brian McGinty, "Charles Warren Stoddard: The Pleasure of His Company," *California Historical Quarterly* 52 (1973): 153-169. Stoddard was first discussed critically by Franklin Walker in *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (New York: Knopf, 1939), 273-4. The first biography of Stoddard is Carl Gerhardt Strove, "A Life of Charles Warren Stoddard" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1940). Robert L. Gale provides additional biographical information in his monograph *Charles Warren Stoddard* (Boise, ID: Boise State University Press, 1977). Both Strove and Gale are notable in their omission of references to Stoddard's obvious homosexuality. It is not until Austen's *Genteel Pagan* that all aspects of Stoddard's

- life, including his sexual orientation and its effect on his life and writing, receive full attention.
9. Several stories from *South-Sea Idyls* appeared first in magazines. For example, "Chumming with a Savage" was first published in the *Overland Monthly* in 1869, and Howells himself accepted "A Prodigal in Tahiti" for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1872.
  10. William Dean Howells explains some of the circumstances of this unfavorable reception: "Our dear Osgood . . . brought out the American edition on the eve of the great panic of '73, and so it did not count; and your London publisher defamed your delicate and charming text with illustrations so vulgar and repulsive that I do not think anyone could have looked twice inside the abominable cover." William Dean Howells, "Introductory Letter" in *South-Sea Idyls* by Charles Warren Stoddard (New York: Scribners, 1904), vi. Osgood refers to Boston publisher James R. Osgood of James R. Osgood & Company, which first published *South-Sea Idyls*. The company went bankrupt in 1878, leading to Osgood & Company's eventual assimilation by Houghton, Mifflin, & Company. For a detailed chronology of Osgood's publishing career, see <http://staffweb.lib.uiowa.edu/shuttner/PUBLISHR.HTM>. The London Edition of *South-Sea Idyls* was brought out under the title *Summer Cruising in the South Seas* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1874), and included twenty-five illustrations decried both by Howells and the general public who reacted negatively to these hastily added sketches. The drawings by Wallis MacKay were "uninspired" and had been heterosexualized by showing more native females than Stoddard wrote about in his stories (Austen, *Genteel*, 68).
  11. The second revised American edition of *South-Sea Idyls* (New York: Scribners, 1892) contained an "Introductory Letter" by Howells full of praise for Stoddard. A reissue of this edition appeared in 1904. All references are to the 1904 edition.
  12. Howells, "Introductory Letter," v-vi.
  13. Howells, "Introductory Letter," vi.
  14. Both *The Dial* and *The Catholic Review* gave supportive reviews to the 1892 edition of *South-Sea Idyls*.
  15. Stoddard, 1.
  16. Stoddard, 1-2. Following the lead of Roger Austen, I will refer to Stoddard's first-person storyteller as "the narrator" rather than Stoddard himself. Many of these stories are based on Stoddard's real-life experiences, but the tales are simultaneously amalgams of many journeys. Moreover, Stoddard seemed to cast the narrator as a fictionalized creation to defer criticism of his behavior from the Victorian reading public.
  17. Stoddard, 15.
  18. Stoddard, 16-17.
  19. Stoddard, 301-2.
  20. Stoddard, 302.
  21. Myra Jehlen, "The Literature of Colonization" in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Volume 1, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch, et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33.
  22. Stoddard, 302.
  23. See Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1950) and Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land:*

*Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). A related study that discusses attitudes towards the environment in American literature is Cecelia Tichi, *New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). While Stoddard is not encountering the Western American "frontier" in a literal sense, he is working within another type of frontier in the South Seas—one also marked by native populations and large undeveloped areas.

24. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 23. McClintock's study is particularly useful for its emphasis on the relationship between sexuality and imperial control.
25. Roger Austen, *Playing the Game: The Homosexual Novel in America* (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1977), 11-12. Austen's book is a thorough treatment of homosexual characters and writers as they have evolved in American literature.
26. For a thorough account of the history of Tahiti, see Colin Newbury, *Change and Survival in French Polynesia, 1767-1945* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980) and David Armine Howarth, *Tahiti: A Paradise Lost* (London: Harwill Press, 1983). Newbury writes: "Yet in all the numerous inhabited groups that eventually became part of French Polynesia, Tahiti and its port gained a special significance: they became the central place for a maritime culture in a region that has been profoundly influenced by the development of a commercial and political capital" (1-2).
27. Stoddard, 132.
28. Stoddard, 136.
29. Stoddard, 137.
30. Stoddard, 137.
31. Stoddard, 139.
32. Stoddard, 139.
33. For in-depth discussions of how colonial writers use language as a means of categorization and dominance, see Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991); Daniel Bivona, *British Imperial Literature 1870-1940: Writing and the Administration of Empire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1998).
34. Stoddard, 141.
35. Stoddard, 141.
36. Austen, *Genteel*, 180. As a testament to the lingering ambiguity of *South-Sea Idyls*, Austen notes that some libraries catalog the book under "fiction" and others "travel" (180).
37. John Crowley, "Introduction," *Genteel Pagan*, xxvii.
38. Stoddard, 143.
39. Stoddard, 144.
40. Vicente L. Raphael, "White Love: Surveillance and Nationalist Resistance in the U.S. Colonization of the Philippines," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1993), 186.
41. Stoddard, 147.
42. Stoddard, 148.

43. Stoddard, 150.
44. Stoddard, 150.
45. Stoddard, 150.
46. Stoddard, 152.
47. Howard L. Malchow, *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 129.
48. Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" in *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*, ed. Margaret L. Carter (Ann Arbor and London: UMI Research Press, 1988), 190. Craft's essay provides an interesting discussion of *Dracula* and Victorian attitudes towards homosexuality. See also Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990).
49. Stoddard, 152-3.
50. Stoddard, 153.
51. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993). Here, I conflate Said's ideas on French and British imperial activity to Stoddard's work because the French were similarly active in Tahiti and Stoddard is working within this mid- to late-nineteenth-century cultural realm.
52. Malchow, 41.
53. Malchow argues that as the nineteenth century progressed, cannibalism "was dwelt upon as a signifier of race" (55).
54. Malchow, 124.
55. "Joe of Lahaina" appeared first in the *Overland Monthly* in July 1870.
56. Stoddard, 100.
57. Stoddard, 102.
58. Stoddard, 102.
59. Austen notes the difficulty faced by early writers of gay fiction: "as opposed to their compatriots who were writing poetry, the novelists suffered from having to specify who was doing what to whom, a problem that writers of gay verse were often able to circumvent" (*Playing* 7).
60. Stoddard, 101.
61. Stoddard, 104.
62. McClintock, 23.
63. Austen, *Playing*, 1.
64. Austen, *Playing*, 2.
65. Of note is that the term "homosexual" did not enter Western discourse until the last third of the nineteenth century. Stoddard was therefore working in generally uncharted territory in *South-Sea Idyls*. For a full discussion of how the cultural idea of homosexuality has developed, see David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
66. Austen, *Genteel*, 59.
67. Crowley, xxvii.
68. Walker writes of *South-Sea Idyls*: "In writing of the tranquil islands which he loved, Stoddard made little attempt to keep to the truth" (273).
69. See James Fenimore Cooper, *Jack Tier, or, the Florida Reef* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1848). Examining *Jack Tier*, Leslie Fiedler concludes that "there was little Cooper could do to undercut his own creation; his version of love between

males, more enduring and purer than heterosexual passion, had become an undying myth as had Natty and Chingachgook." Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion, 1950), 212. Though the "myth" of homosexuality in American literature is evident in *Jack Tier*, the literal expression of this myth is what appears in *South-Sea Idyls*.

70. See Robert K. Martin, "Melville and Sexuality, *The Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Robert S. Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 186-201; Julian Markels, "Melville's Sexual Politics," *Review* 9 (1987): 215-30; Robert K. Martin, "'Enviably Isles': Melville's South Seas," *Homosexual Themes in Literary Studies*, ed. Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson (New York: Garland, 1992): 224-32.
71. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 3.
72. Stoddard, 106. For a thorough discussion of leprosy, see W. H. Jopling and A. C. McDougall, *Handbook of Leprosy* (Oxford: Heinemann Professional Publications, 1988).
73. Stoddard, 108.
74. Stoddard visited Molokai and the leper colony on several occasions. He first toured the island in 1868, visited again in 1885, and later published *The Lepers of Molokai* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1886), which praises the efforts of missionaries, including the famous Father Damien, who dedicated himself to caring for those afflicted. Stoddard's diary of his visit to Molokai was published posthumously as *CW Stoddard's Diary of a Visit to Molokai in 1884, with a Letter from Father Damien to His Brother in 1873*, Introduction by Oscar Lewis (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1933).
75. London visited Molokai in 1907 as part of his *Snark* cruise.
76. Jerome Hamilton Buckley. *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 230-231. Buckley notes that one facet of Victorian Decadence was exploration of homosexuality.
77. Stoddard, 110.
78. Stoddard, 110.
79. Stoddard, 113.
80. Stoddard, 114.
81. The narrator's amorous journeys in the South Seas were a type of nineteenth-century "sex tour." Discussing Marco Polo's *Life of the Buddha*, Michael Calabrese uncovers a "complex drama between tolerance and judgment that arises when a Western Christian witnesses the sexual experiences of non-Christian peoples" and argues that through travel, the West "can fulfill its desire through the Other." Such behavior is clearly visible in Stoddard's stories "Under a Grass Roof" and "Kahéle." Michael Calabrese, "Between Despair and Ecstasy: Marco Polo's Life of the Buddha," *Exemplaria* 9.1 (March 1997): 191.
82. Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 268.
83. Craft, 167.
84. Craft, 167.
85. McClintock, 2.
86. Sedgwick, 1.

87. Smith-Rosenberg, 38.
88. Crowley, xxv. He explains that the terms “heterosexual” and “homosexual” had not yet been “articulated” in Victorian America and believes they were in the process of being constructed by scientific and cultural discourse of the period.
89. Smith-Rosenberg, 75.
90. Discussing “Carmilla” and *Dracula*, Malchow identifies a “dangerous sexuality” that can lead to infection, such as the syphilis that may have infected Stoker. Nina Auerbach suggests that in some vampire novels of the 1980s and 1990s, “vampirism is a wasting disease like AIDS” and claims that as a result, “vampirism mutated from hideous appetite to nausea.” Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Our-selves* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 175, 192. If we view the homosexual as Other, then analogies between leprosy and AIDS reveal how each functions within late-nineteenth and late-twentieth-century culture. For a vampire novel that confronts AIDS, see Dan Simmons, *Children of the Night* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1992).
91. The story “My South-Sea Show,” for example, features the narrator bringing three natives to America for a traveling show, only to watch one die from drinking perfume.
92. Stoddard, 19. This isolation was probably literal, as Austen explains that to “sleep with the savages,” during the 1868 trip to visit his sister on the islands, Stoddard had to leave the watchful eyes of his relatives (Austen, *Genteel*, 42-3).
93. Stoddard, 21.
94. Stoddard, 21.
95. Stoddard, 25.
96. Austen, *Playing*, 15.
97. Fiedler, xi. Fiedler argues that American writers fail to deal openly with heterosexual love in their work, but neglects to acknowledge the real homosexuality present in the work of writers like Stoddard.
98. Walker, 270.
99. Van Wyck Brooks, *The Times of Melville and Whitman* (New York: Dutton, 1947), 263.
100. Robert L. Gale, *Charles Warren Stoddard* (Boise: Boise State University, 1977), 14.
101. Crowley, xxix.
102. Stoddard, 36.
103. Stoddard, 37.
104. Wai-Chee Dimock, “Debasing Exchange: Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth*,” *PMLA* 100 (October 1985): 787.
105. Stoddard, 37.
106. Stoddard, 39.
107. Crowley, xxxi.
108. Stoddard, 45.
109. Stoddard, 61.
110. Stoddard, 61.
111. Stoddard, 62.
112. Stoddard, 65.
113. Stoddard, 55.

114. Austen explains: "Americans in the nineteenth century simply lacked the terms with which to define people like Stoddard" (*Playing* 24). The difficulty in defining terms related to sexuality and gender is exhibited by Sedgwick's sixty-three page introduction to *Epistemology of the Closet* in which she attempts to provide a working definition of homo/heterosexuality. For a detailed study tracing sexuality in America from the seventeenth century, see John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Affairs: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).
115. Sedgwick, *Closet*, 3.
116. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggle," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Anne Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991), 17.
117. Mary Austin, *Earth Horizon* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), 301.
118. Stevenson and his wife wrote extensively about their journeys in the Pacific. See Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas: The Marquesas, Paumotu, and Gilbert Islands* (London, New York, Sydney & Henley: KPI, 1986. reprint of 1900 ed.); Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson (Fanny Vandegrif Osborne Stevenson), *The Cruise of the Janet Nichol Among the South Sea Islands* (New York: Scribners, 1914).
119. Jack London, Oakland, to Charles Warren Stoddard, 21 August 1903, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
120. Jack London, Rio Vista, to Charles Warren Stoddard, 10 February 1905, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
121. For a discussion of Stoddard's religious confusion and his conversion to Catholicism, see Christine M. Bochen, *Personal Narratives by Nineteenth-Century American Catholics: A Study in Conversion Literature* (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1980). Bochen examines Stoddard's autobiographical conversion narrative, *A Troubled Heart and How It Was Comforted at Last* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1886), assessing the process by which he reached the decision to embrace Catholicism.
122. Austen, *Genteel*, xliii.
123. As recent literary studies show, critical interest in Stoddard is increasing. In addition, an excerpt from "Chumming with Savage" appears in the recent popular collection *Erogenous Zones: An Anthology of Sex Abroad*, ed. Lucretia Stewart (New York: The Modern Library, 2000).





## Chapter Five

# “And Who Are These White Men?”: Jack London’s *The House of Pride* and American Colonization of the Hawaiian Islands

“It was all due to Captain Joshua Slocum and his *Spray*, plus our own wayward tendencies,”<sup>1</sup> writes Charmian London in *The Log of the Snark*. She explains:

We read him aloud to the 1905 camp children at Wake Robin Lodge, in the Valley of the Moon, as we sat in the hot sun resting between water fights and games of tag in the deep swimming pool. *Sailing Alone Around the World* was the name of the book, and when Jack closed the cover on the last chapter, there was a new idea looking out of his eyes. Joshua Slocum did it all alone, in a thirty-seven-foot sloop. Why could not we do it, in a somewhat larger boat, with a little more sociable crew? Jack and I loved the water, and a long voyage was our dream. He and Roscoe fell at once to discussing the scheme, the rest of us listening fascinated.<sup>1</sup>

Jack London continues the story in *The Cruise of the Snark* as he and Roscoe discuss their daring plan. London recalls: “We asserted that we were not afraid to go around the world in a small boat, say forty feet long. We asserted furthermore that we would like to do it. We asserted finally that there was nothing in this world we’d like better than a chance to do it.”<sup>2</sup> As the three adventurers then consider the possibility of this voyage and contemplate the best time to embark, London writes: “We thought we would start in four or five years. Then the lure of the adventure began to grip us. Why not start at once? We’d never be younger, any of us.... So the trip was decided upon, and the building of the Snark began.”<sup>2</sup> The trio planned to depart for Honolulu on October 1, 1906, but because of numerous delays, including the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, cost overruns, and building problems,

the *Snark* did not sail until April 23, 1907. Moreover, misguided planning, faulty construction, and poor equipment spiked the boat's final cost to an exorbitant 30,000 dollars. Even to London, who told Roscoe and the shipbuilders: "'Spare no money... Let everything on the *Snark* be of the best''";<sup>4</sup> this sum was a shock, since the original estimate for the *Snark* was approximately seven thousand dollars. Nevertheless, having endured these delays, and with the ship's main engine still inoperable, the *Snark* sailed for Honolulu with the hope of making repairs there.<sup>5</sup> Twenty-seven days later, Jack, Charmian, Roscoe, and three crewmembers arrived in Honolulu.

There was more to this journey for Jack London than simply sailing around the world, proving the worth of his vessel, pursuing adventure, or even printing his travel observations in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan Magazine* and *Woman's Home Companion*, with which he had made publishing deals before departure. After leaving Hawaii and cruising into harbor at the Marquesan island of Nukuheva, London realized a boyhood dream inspired by his reading of Melville's account of the island sixty years earlier. He writes in *The Cruise of the Snark*:

When I was a little boy, I read a book [*Typee*]... and many long hours I dreamed over it's pages. Nor was it all dreaming. I resolved then and there, mightily, come what would, that when I had gained strength and years, I, too, would voyage to Typee... for I was bent on finding another Fayaway and another Kory-Kory... Then came the rush or years, filled brimming with projects, achievement, and failure; but Typee was not forgotten, and here I was now, gazing at its misty outlines.<sup>5</sup>

But while Melville's semi-autobiographical Tommo saw a vibrant culture populated by "brawny warriors" and the "slighter figures of young girls" full of "wild grace,"<sup>6</sup> London encountered a much different scene. Viewing Islanders ravaged by imported diseases, he laments: "The valley of Typee was the abode of death, and the dozen survivors of the tribe were gasping feebly the last painful breaths of the race."<sup>7</sup> Decimated by the influx of Euroamerican colonizers and traders, the islanders are reduced to painful suffering, and impending extinction of their "race"<sup>8</sup> seems near. What should have been fulfillment of a childhood wish, instead reveals to London the deleterious result of white colonization. On their final night on the island, London notes of himself and his crew: "[we] drowsed and slept wherever we thought the floor softest... and all about us the dying islanders coughed in the night."<sup>9</sup> The haunting image of infected islanders reflects the power of Western influence in the South Pacific. In the rush to find new markets and claim new territories, entire civilizations were destroyed, and cultures were left to watch their members, traditions, and way of life crumble. By the early twentieth century, London's celebrated Hawaii faced these same pressing challenges.

I begin with these anecdotes because of their relevance for interpreting London's 1912 story collection *The House of Pride*. Written during what one critic has named London's "period of decline as a writer of short stories," and usually dubbed the "inferior" of London's two collections of Hawaiian short fiction,<sup>10</sup> *The House of Pride* nonetheless occupies an important place in American literary history. While the depth and length of these stories does not always approach the level of those in his other Hawaiian story collection, *On the Makaloa Mat*, with their widespread Jungian underpinnings,<sup>11</sup> the stories of *The House of Pride* do offer fascinating forays into turn-of-the-century Hawaiian culture. The genesis of these stories was London's visit to Hawaii aboard the *Snark* in 1907, and an examination of the circumstances of the trip, including London's own description of his experience, helps shed light on these tales and their cultural function in early-twentieth-century America. Particularly significant is London's depiction of the Hawaiian people and the foreign colonizers on the Islands, as these literary portraits allow consideration of London's *racial* representations in the stories. Viewing foreign cultures as Other, London's American readers demanded remarkable portrayal of these groups in their literature. With the publication of *The House of Pride* in 1912,<sup>12</sup> London becomes an indirect, but influential participant in the ongoing American colonization of the Hawaiian Islands as the collection continues a pattern of "literary colonization" in American literature visible as early as 1846 in Melville's *Typee*.<sup>13</sup>

The collection begins with the title story, "The House of Pride," which explores the "tainted blood" of Percival Ford's half-brother Joe Garland. Percival Ford is a major landowner on Hawaii and "one of the big men of the Islands."<sup>14</sup> Father of Isaac Ford, a nineteenth-century New England missionary, Percival is, as his physician Dr. Kennedy remarks, of "pure New England stock," and a "negative organism" lacking "vitality."<sup>15</sup> Percival looks at his Yankee past with reverence, however. He is proud of his father's colonizing activities, lionizing him as a "soldier of the Lord," who had "stepped in between the trading crowd and its prey and taken possession of fat, vast holdings"<sup>16</sup> when feudal society was dissolving on the islands. Enmeshed in his self-perceived "righteousness," Percival believes that as a white landlord on Hawaii, he is merely continuing his father's "spiritual" and philanthropic work by providing patriarchal and economic guidance for the natives. Never does Percival consider the social and economic domination forced on Hawaii by land-hungry Americans. A significant blow is dealt to Percival's self-constructed "house of pride" when he discovers that half-caste Joe Garland is his half brother. Joe is half Kanaka, half white — the product of his father's affair with a Hawaiian woman. Percival Ford's first reactions to this news relayed by his physician Dr. Kennedy are disbelief and denial, calling the claim a "ghastly joke" and a "lie."<sup>17</sup> But an examination of Joe's features makes Percival realize "that he

was gazing on a wraith of himself” where “[f]eature after feature flashed up an unmistakable resemblance.”<sup>18</sup> This knowledge does not compel Percival to embrace his brother as a link to his father, however. Rather, he asks Joe frankly: “How much will you take to leave the islands and never come back?”<sup>19</sup> Always accommodating to his ungrateful half-brother, Joe answers: “All right... I’ll go.”<sup>20</sup> The man with non-European blood is callously sent away to assuage his white brother’s guilt and discomfort. Embarrassed by his father’s indiscretion and prompted by his dislike for what he calls Joe’s “immorality” and “lust,” Percival is content to see his brother banished from the island he lovingly calls home. The story closes with Percival smiling “long and contentedly to himself,”<sup>21</sup> as he will no longer have to consider his father’s improprieties or his own unstable status among the islanders.

Read metaphorically, “The House of Pride” clearly exposes the evils of American expansion in the Pacific. Percival Ford and his father Isaac represent the colonizing missionaries who abuse the native people by taking their land, exploiting their labor, fathering children, and then casting off their own offspring as tainted and illegitimate. The analogy to Southern slaveholders of the nineteenth century is obvious. Thomas R. Hietala explains that the United States “used many tactics to expand its domain, and like other empires it created legitimizing myths to sanction that expansion.”<sup>22</sup> In the case of Hawaii, missionaries and land-grabbing plantation owners were the force behind such mythologized American expansion. “The House of Pride” underscores the displacement faced by local Islanders at the hands of a justifying colonial myth centered around old arguments of civilization versus savagery, tempered by newer economic interests. Such thinking was not uncommon in turn-of-the-century America, however. David Wrobel notes that in 1890, Professor John W. Burgess of Columbia claimed that “a few thousand savages in the Polynesian Islands had no right to reserve for themselves lands capable of sustaining millions of civilized men.”<sup>23</sup> On this level, then, London’s text reveals the malignancy of American influence and sympathetically displays the troubles faced by the native and mixed-blood islanders. But read as a story of colonization, we can see that “The House of Pride” deploys racial stereotypes that ultimately support Percival’s final act of banishment — offering a vision not of multicultural community and harmony, but of American occupation and control.

Homi K. Bhabha calls the stereotype the “major discursive strategy” of colonial communication and claims: “The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference — racial and sexual.”<sup>24</sup> Through their attitudes towards Hawaiian Islanders, the white characters in the “The House of Pride” serve to reinforce these stereotypes essential to the American colonial project. For example, Percival Ford calls Joe Garland a “wastrel” and a “profligate,” and dislikes his festive guitar playing, dancing, and love of “strong drink.”<sup>25</sup> These acts

are hardly morally questionable in themselves, but become derogatory when filtered through the righteous eye of American conservatism and racism. Moreover, Dr. Kennedy is another white culprit as he also promulgates these same stereotypes. Though he is sympathetic towards Joe, Kennedy describes both brothers in racial terms, calling Percival's white blood "thin" and Joe's half-Kanaka blood "warm." In addition, Kennedy also demeans Joe as both "genial" and "childlike."<sup>26</sup> These stereotypes, particularly from a character who defends Joe's behavior to Percival, reinforce the idea of the Other as warm-blooded, carefree, and lustful — attributes which would undermine the strict economic and social order imposed by America on its territory. Joe is able to circumvent his brother's righteousness by agreeing to leave the island without accepting any payment from Percival, and with this act, Joe is invested with moral superiority. But the plot nonetheless advocates the continued dominating role of white landholders and the literal "deportation" of any who possess "tainted" blood. For Percival Ford and American readers, Joe Garland is a reminder of the guilty past of American missionaries and colonizers. The new territory, this story suggests, can only continue on its path of hypocritical piety and economic prosperity if the Hawaiian, "dark side," of this racial mixture is rendered invisible.

As miscegenation is "remedied" by exiling in "The House of Pride," it is avoided altogether as a curse to Americans in "Aloha-Oe." This story also provides an ostensible critique of American racial prejudice, but ultimately reinforces the American colonial economic system on Hawaii. At the center of "Aloha-Oe" is Dorothy Sambrooke who has spent a month in Honolulu with her father, Senator Jeremy Sambrooke, and a score of American senators. The men visit in order to "behold the glories and resources of Hawaii"<sup>27</sup> and survey its economic potential for the United States. At their departure, the Hawaiian orchestra plays "Aloha-Oe" and Dorothy, a girl of fifteen, recalls her friendship with Stephen Knight, a "bronzed god of the sea"<sup>28</sup> who demonstrates surfing to the visiting American party. Watching Stephen's "blazing eyes" as he bids her farewell, Dorothy realizes in her "first moment of known love" that "she and Steve were being torn apart," and that her friend "was something more to her than playfellow."<sup>29</sup>

The more serious development of this relationship was prevented by Dorothy's youthful naiveté, but her burgeoning thoughts of pursuing Stephen further are dashed by the dynamics of turn-of-the-century race relations. Dorothy asks her father if Stephen may visit them in the United States, and the Senator replies: "Certainly not... Stephen Knight is a 'hapa-haole' and you know what that means."<sup>30</sup> During this brief stay in Hawaii, Dorothy has received a shocking initiation into racism. With great pain, she thinks of Stephen: "He could have dinner with her and her father, dance with her, and be a member of the entertainment committee; but because there was tropic sunshine in his veins, he could not marry

her.”<sup>31</sup> By highlighting the Senator’s elitism and Dorothy’s introduction to racism, the story offers a nominal critique of American prejudices. The American visitors are eager to explore the Islands’ natural wonders, visit the sugar and coffee plantations, and view surfing exhibitions. But those who act as guides and provide these exhibitions are not of “pure” blood, and are therefore treated as only a means to American economic ends. Never are the Hawaiians deemed worthy of equality. The Senator illustrates this point with his gaze: “as he looked out over the multitude on the wharf it was with a statistical eye that saw none of the beauty, but that peered into the labor power, the factories, the railroads, and the plantations that lay back of the multitude and which the multitude expressed.”<sup>32</sup> The Senator refuses to view the Hawaiians as individuals, but as a “multitude” that only “expresses” the core mercantile use Hawaii will have for America. While the injustice of such racism is highlighted in “Aloha-Oe,” the story does not venture a deeper racial critique. “Aloha-Oe” never condones the possible match of Dorothy and Stephen nor does it posit any vision of American and Hawaiian equality. Like Percival Ford, Senator Sambrooke and his American system can only see the Islands in Anglo-centric, economic terms and “Aloha-Oe” reinforces this colonial hierarchical vision — providing an imperial paradigm for American readers. One can see in Senator Sambrooke echoes of Senator Orville Platt of Connecticut who said in 1895: “it is to the ocean that our children must look, as they have looked to the boundless West, for the opportunity to develop their ambition and their talents.”<sup>33</sup> Neither considers, however, that the islands in this ocean are already occupied by others. For Senator Sambrooke and his peers, the only issue of concern is economics, and exposing Americans to the Islands’ enormous potential only deepens the colonial mindset in America. As a result, Hawaii gains credence as a place worthy of much greater American influence.

The complex issue of racial mixing on the Hawaiian Islands is broached more deeply in the story, “Chun ah Chun.” A native of China, Ah Chun first came to Hawaii as a coolie laborer indebted for three years to a sugar plantation. While working in the fields, he used keen observation skills to master the sugar industry and learned the economic lesson that “[t]he men who grew rich did so from the labor of the hands of others.”<sup>34</sup> After his release from service, Ah Chun enters the labor-importing business, brings “thousands of Cantonese coolies into Hawaii, and [watches] his wealth [begin] to grow.”<sup>35</sup> With careful management, shrewd land buying, and wise investments, Ah Chun becomes one of the wealthiest men in Honolulu. In order to marry, he becomes a Hawaiian subject and weds Stella Alledale, a woman who carries a mixture of Polynesian, American, English, Italian, and Portuguese blood. In time, the couple produces fifteen children, builds many lavish residences, and entertains the finest of the local populace. In this case, racial mixing creates a well-respected family that is both prosperous and highly valued

by society. Problems arise when Ah Chun questions why his beautiful and well-educated daughters are not married — though always accompanied by young American men. One man in particular, American naval officer Captain Higginson, has not pursued Henrietta, their eldest. Mama Achun explains to her husband: "it is because [h]is family in the United States is a high one. They would not like it... if he did not marry an American girl."<sup>36</sup> Though his daughters possess all the marriageable qualities, their racial mixing causes American men to reject them. This elitist attitude clearly stresses the prevalence of American racism on the islands, and these ingrained beliefs hamper the social aspirations of Ah Chun's daughters. But Ah Chun has a plan and announces: "Henrietta is the oldest girl. The day she marries I will give her three hundred thousand dollars. That will fetch Captain Higginson and his high family along with him."<sup>37</sup> Ah Chun is correct, and Henrietta and her sisters are each married off with handsome dowries. With his money, then, Ah Chun exposes and circumvents the hypocrisy of American values. As Andrew Furer, puts it: "white society's adherence to ideals of racial purity is itself impure and up for sale."<sup>38</sup> Though stringently loyal to a Western racial hierarchy, those Americans colonizing Hawaii will abandon their racism if the price is right.

But money and position do not necessarily guarantee contentment, and it is here that the story's critique of racism begins to falter. Among Ah Chun's newly married daughters and sons-in-law, "echoes of bickerings and jealousies were already rumbling... [and] the air was thick with schemes and counter-schemes to gain his favor and to prejudice him against one or another or all but one of his sons-in-law."<sup>39</sup> Ah Chun had always realized that because of his Chinese background, "he was an alien in his family" and in trying to understand his family, "[a]lways he came upon the wall that divides East from West."<sup>40</sup> Intent upon avoiding these internal feuds and living peacefully, Ah Chun adequately provides for each family member, and "[o]ne fine morning when the family was at breakfast... he announced that he was returning to his ancestral soil."<sup>41</sup> Seeking a life of repose in China, he bids his family farewell and leaves Hawaii forever. His move does not settle the bickering between his family members, however. Among Ah Chun's children, "[s]uits, cross-suits, and counter-suits cluttered the Hawaiian courts."<sup>42</sup> Ah Chun remains aloof, though, and simply "advises his family to live in harmony"<sup>43</sup> while he enjoys his peace and repose away from Hawaii.

"Chun ah Chun" depicts two significant aspects on American colonialism: First, while the initial results of Ah Chun's marriage are socially positive — personal success and a large, prosperous family — when Americans are introduced, the situation deteriorates. The story strongly identifies American racial hypocrisy in Ah Chun's need to "sell" his daughters. But in its portrayal of a bickering family, the story also posits that true harmony between races and their mixed offspring is problematic and perhaps impossible in a colonial system. Second, by leaving for

China, Ah Chun's actions underscore the foreign elitism expressed by Senator Sambrooke and other influential outsiders. Both wealthy men view the islands as place of enormous exploitable wealth, but unity with the native people is eschewed in favor of long-distance, absentee control from one's native soil — a direct reflection of Hawaii as foreign territory. As Noel J. Kent notes: "By 1910, [the] pattern of tight-knot business direction over Hawaii's economic affairs was firmly established."<sup>44</sup> With only these business interests in mind, neither man takes a sympathetic look at the Hawaiian people.

Taken together, the inability of "The House of Pride," "Aloha Oe," and "Chun Ah Chun" to offer possibilities for an equal union between Hawaii and America contributes to prevailing turn-of-the-century American colonialist attitudes. In each, any suggestion of American and Hawaiian collaboration and cooperation is dashed over fears of racial mixing, so that white superiority is subtly championed, leading to a further justification and encouragement of American colonial control. Moreover, though the stories attempt to expose racial and ethnic prejudice, the conclusion of each undermines these critiques in favor of a colonial vision of the islands. The presentation of an island paradise full of sugar and coffee plantations and abundant potential laborers serves less as a cultural critique than a promotional tract for continued American expansion and exploitation of the islands. London may have strongly supported Hawaiian culture, but his efforts are held captive by his audience's expectations and the sensibilities of the time period. As a result, the stories fail in their attempts to provide anything but a vision of Hawaii as a subjugated American territory, and their potentially powerful literary impact never ventures beyond inhibited racial commentary.

As a piece of historical and cultural literature, *The House of Pride* is also noteworthy for its fictional treatment of leprosy on the Hawaiian Islands. Though "Koolau the Leper" is the best known of these tales, "The Sheriff of Kona" and "Good-By, Jack" also take leprosy as their subject, and in this trio we see London grappling with the results of this disfiguring disease. Brought to the Islands by foreigners — primarily Chinese laborers — during the nineteenth century, leprosy caused a massive decline in the Islands' population so that by 1875, the population was at its lowest point in history.<sup>45</sup> While leprosy's effect on Typee society was a near-destruction of their race, such widespread epidemics had been addressed on the Hawaiian Islands through establishment of the Molokai settlement.<sup>46</sup> Little was known of the colony by foreigners, and London's visit to Molokai provided a highly anticipated peek into this community. David A Moreland explains:

'Chapter VII: The Lepers of Molokai,' which appeared in the January, 1908, issue of *Woman's Home Companion*, was of such importance that it alone jus-



tified the *Snark* cruise. For the first time an American writer with a large audience spoke out to debunk the lurid myths of horror and degradation that enshrouded leprosy and its treatment on the Hawaiian Island of Molokai.<sup>47</sup>

In many ways, London's descriptions in *The Cruise of the Snark* supply a vivid picture of the situation at Molokai, and he is careful to emphasize what he deems pleasant and misrepresented aspects of colony life. He writes: "the segregation of the lepers on Molokai is not the horrible nightmare that has been so often exploited.... For example, the leper is not torn ruthlessly from family."<sup>48</sup> London also notes that there is a great deal of industry and activity in the colony, and claims preference for a year at Molokai to the "cesspools of human degradation and misery" he found in East London, the East side of New York, or the Chicago Stockyards.<sup>49</sup> Free of the type of economic exploitation that drove London to the Socialist Party, Molokai did, in one sense, offer the lepers of the Hawaiian Islands a relatively unhampered existence. Because he observed these residents firsthand, London's stories in *The House of Pride* reveal sympathy and an acquired understanding of the lepers' conditions and difficulties that no outside observer could provide. But these stories also raise important issues of "race" and imperialism that expose a great deal about London and the troubling influence of his historical period.

James Lundquist has argued that because of London's visit to Molokai, leprosy became "an appropriate and powerful backdrop for the struggle against imperialism London apparently was beginning to appreciate in the later years of a short life."<sup>50</sup> Nowhere is this anti-imperialist attitude more visible than in the collection's best-known story, "Koolau the Leper." Infected with leprosy, Koolau becomes the leader of a group of lepers on Kauai who, he insists, must resist their impending deportation to Molokai. Koolau opens the story with an ardent speech to his followers:

'Because we are sick they take away our liberty. We have obeyed the law. We have done no wrong. And yet they would put us in prison. Molokai is a prison. That you know. Niuli, there, his sister was sent to Molokai seven years ago. He has not seen her since. Nor will he ever see her. She must stay there until she dies. This is not her will. It is not Niuli's will. It is the will of the white men who rule the land. And who are these white men?'<sup>51</sup>

In this diatribe, Koolau stresses the painful abyss of existence at the colony. For a leper, deportation is incontestable, and little time is given for farewells before departure. Families are separated, and once sent to Molokai, a leper will die there. Koolau's denunciation of the imprisonment foisted upon Hawaiians by "white men" foregrounds their collective loss of liberty in order to inspire his followers.

Stirred by outrage, Koolau further castigates the traders and missionaries who invaded the Islands. He exclaims:

‘The one kind asked our permission, our gracious permission, to preach to us the word of God. The other kind asked our permission, our gracious permission, to trade with us. That was the beginning. To-day all the islands are theirs, all the land, all the cattle — everything is theirs.... They live like kings in houses of many rooms, with multitudes of servants to care for them.’<sup>52</sup>

Koolau continues his invective by implicating white capitalists and land speculators for their role in bringing leprosy to Hawaii. He says: “‘Because we would not work the miles of sugarcane where once our horses pastured, they brought the Chinese slaves from over seas. And with them came the Chinese sickness — that which we suffer from and because of which they would imprison us on Molokai.’”<sup>53</sup> In Koolau’s passionate outbursts, London gives voice to the dislocated and exploited Hawaiians cast from their homes to Molokai because of a disease brought by foreign colonizers such as Percival Ford, Senator Sambrooke, and Chun Ah Chun. Because of their actions in the interest of commerce, and, ostensibly, religion, the native population, like that on Nukuheva, is decimated by disease. London’s narration here is commendable, as Furer notes of Koolau: “London emphasizes the moral superiority of the Polynesians by giving this speech to a man of high rank and great insight who has been brought low by greed, hypocrisy, and arrogant callousness of Anglo-Saxon invaders.”<sup>54</sup> Through Koolau, the grievances of a silent group are aired for an American audience unaware of the damage caused to the Island population — a critical treatment fueled by London’s own visit to the leper colony. In this sympathetic rendering of the settlement, London moves forcefully beyond the shallow presentation offered earlier by Stoddard and Twain.

“Koolau the Leper” continues its indictment of foreign control over Hawaii in its graphic description of disfigured lepers. The narrator describes Koolau’s “subjects”: “Their faces were leonine. Here a space yawned in a face where should have been a nose, and there an arm-stump showed where a hand had rotted off”; and continues: “‘They were creatures who once had been men and women. But they were men and women no longer. They were monsters — in face and form grotesque caricatures of everything human.’”<sup>55</sup> Howard Malchow has argued that “Imperial gothic is to a large extent racial gothic,”<sup>56</sup> and in this gothic presentation of lepers, London subtly foregrounds the imperialism that underscored their infection. Moreover, because his is not the sexual colonialism presented by Stoddard, his “gothic” is linked more strongly to imperialism than erotic vampirism. London’s broader focus is on the lepers as vibrant individuals. Even ravaged by disease, these lepers cling proudly to their adopted home and maintain Koolau’s

fierce criticism of foreigners on the Islands. Kapalei, whose face is featureless, "save for gaping orifices," reiterates Koolau's beliefs as he argues: "Let us live here, or die here, but do not let us go to the prison of Molokai.... I have been a judge. I know the law and the justice, and I say to you it is unjust to steal a man's land, to make that man sick with the Chinese sickness, and then to put that man in prison for life."<sup>57</sup> Though deportation to Molokai is allegedly carried out to prevent further spread of the disease, Kapalei stresses the lack of justice in these actions. In many cases, lepers lost not only their families, but all of their possessions. In "Chun Ah Chun," for example, Ah Chun often bought land at a discount from "from widows and orphans and the lepers deported to Molokai."<sup>58</sup> This economically motivated tyranny is what Koolau and his followers are actively resisting, and because they are cast in heroic roles, lepers receive far greater treatment and voice from London than from either Twain or Stoddard.

Much of the story's action involves Koolau's valiant fending off of police and soldiers bent upon capturing him. To his advantage, Koolau's location is well situated, as the narrator explains: "The far head of Kalalau Valley had been well chosen as a refuge... no man could win to the gorge save by advancing across a knife-edged ridge. This passage was a hundred yards in length. At best, it was a scant twelve inches wide. On either side yawned the abyss."<sup>59</sup> But the valley is "well chosen" for other reasons, for it is "an earthly paradise [where a] sea of vegetation laved the landscape."<sup>60</sup> It is from this "paradise" that the police wish to take Koolau and his followers for deportation to Molokai. As the police approach and call for Koolau, he notices that "the man who led the native police [was] himself a blue-eyed American."<sup>61</sup> This man's racial status casts him as one of the outsiders who have drawn the ire of these lepers on Kauai. Moreover, this police officer represents the foreign rule thrust upon Hawaiians by their colonizers. As the Sheriff threatens approach, Koolau warns: "You do me wrong when you try to put me in prison.... You will die before you get across."<sup>62</sup> With a background as a wild-cattle hunter, Koolau is an excellent marksman, and he quickly shoots the sheriff, who falls to his death. The Sheriff is immediately followed by five policemen, four of whom also fall to their deaths. In all respects, the scene is a massacre as Koolau coolly repels the police who have come to imprison him and collect the thousand-dollar bounty on his head. Too knowledgeable to agree with Kiloliana, who thinks that because of Koolau's marksmanship the lepers will be "bothered no more," Koolau warns his subjects that "[t]he soldiers have not yet spoken" with their "war guns."<sup>63</sup> He is correct. Firing dozens of rounds at the resistors, the soldiers kill and injure a number of Koolau's group, demoralizing many of his followers. As the soldiers draw nearer, Koolau thinks of his desperate situation:

there were a hundred or so of them — all come after Koolau the leper. He felt a fleeting prod of pride. With war guns and rifles, police and soldiers, they came for him, and he was only one man, a crippled wreck of a man at that. They offered a thousand dollars for him, dead or alive. In all his life, he had never possessed that much money. The thought was a bitter one. Kapahei had been right. He, Koolau, had done no wrong. Because the *haoles* wanted labor with which to work the stolen land, they had brought in Chinese coolies, and with them had come the sickness. And now, because he had caught the sickness, he was worth a thousand dollars — but not to himself. It was his worthless carcass, rotten with disease or dead from a bursting shell, that was worth all that money.<sup>64</sup>

The implications of Koolau's thoughts and the connection to colonizing capitalism are clear. In a system where the individual is valued only as source of labor, Koolau's disfigured and nearly unusable body would be worthless. But as a disruptive voice resisting the prison at Molokai, Koolau again obtains value as a potential source of interference within this system. Moreover, as rebellious leader, Koolau experiences pride that he is both noticed by the white imperialists and resistant to their tyranny. But his pride does not last long — the soldiers draw him quickly back to battle with their large artillery. As his people begin to desert him, preferring "the prison of Molokai" to shell fire, Koolau is forced to marvel "at the strange persistence of these *haoles* who would have their will though the sky fell in."<sup>65</sup> Their perseverance leaves him "convinced of the hopelessness of his struggle," and he sees that they "never knew when they were beaten [and]... [i]t was where his own kind lacked."<sup>66</sup> Koolau, however, does not capitulate. For six weeks they hunt him, but "[a]t the end of six weeks they gave up."<sup>67</sup> It is not until two years later that we see Koolau again. The narrator explains: "Two years later, and for the last time, Koolau crawled into a thicket and lay down among the *ti*-leaves and ginger blossoms. Free he had lived, and free he was dying."<sup>68</sup> Koolau passes thinking of his early manhood on Niihau before he became sick, and finally lies down with his rifle "pressed... against his chest with his folded, fingerless hands."<sup>69</sup> Koolau dies a heroic and tragic death and is championed by London as a mouthpiece for opposition to imperialism and active personal resistance.

Viewed as a story of hostility towards oppression, Koolau represents the Hawaiian people fighting an impossible battle against foreign forces. Labor and Reseman argue: "'Koolau' is representative of London's attitude toward the underdog — whether Polynesian, Klondike Indian, East End slum dweller, or American hobo. Jack was unusually touched, however, by the tragic plight of the Hawaiian leper."<sup>70</sup> In his fierce determination while fighting against overwhelming external forces — a deadly disease and better-armed soldiers — Koolau is in many ways a typical naturalistic hero. In London's "A Piece of Steak," for example, fighter Tom King wages a parallel battle. As Tom weakens in the late rounds of a

boxing match with a younger opponent, the narrator explains: "his body had deserted him. All that was left to him was a fighting intelligence that was dimmed and clouded from exhaustion."<sup>71</sup> Tom loses the fight, and, likewise, a physically decimated Koolau eventually falls to stronger forces. Nonetheless, Koolau battles valiantly to stave off the taking of his last bit of humanity: life away from Kauai at the prison of Molokai. Koolau is not simply a naturalistic fighter, however. His desire to remain with his people in his native land underscores Jeanne Reesman's belief that London's "work centers on humans trying to talk their way into community, not on the struggle to dominate."<sup>72</sup> Koolau simply wishes to be left peacefully with others in this bucolic valley. Moreover, Furer notes of Koolau: "His last act is that of a warrior."<sup>73</sup> London clearly champions Koolau as a tragic victim of western colonizers, but London also invests Koolau with grit and pride. "Koolau the Leper," then, does appear to support James Lundquist's claim that "the overplayed and largely false charge that London was an out-and-out racist is negated by his avowed sympathy for exploited peoples, no matter whether they are Polynesians or Siwash Indians."<sup>74</sup> In the remaining two leprosy stories in *The House of Pride*, however, this claim is more difficult to uphold as the subversive power of "race" infiltrates the structure of London's narratives.

In "Good-By, Jack," London shifts perspective to explore leprosy from the atypical viewpoint of *haole* characters. A more sentimental tale than "Koolau the Leper," "Good-By, Jack" recounts the story of Jack Kernsdale, who, like Percival Ford, is a blend of missionary and Yankee trader stock, and a prosperous resident of the Islands. The narrator says of Kernsdale:

He was one of the busiest men I ever met. He was a several-times millionaire. He was a sugar king, a coffee planter, a rubber pioneer, a cattle rancher, and a promoter of three out of every four enterprises launched on the islands. He was a society man, a club man, a yachtsman, a bachelor, and withal as handsome a man as was ever doted upon by mamas with marriageable daughters.<sup>75</sup>

As a member of Hawaii's ruling class, Jack Kernsdale embodies those denounced by Koolau for living "like kings in houses of many rooms."<sup>76</sup> In addition to this social and economic success, the narrator is also impressed with Kernsdale's "grit," as he explains that Kernsdale "played a most creditable and courageous part in the last revolution, when the native dynasty was overthrown."<sup>77</sup> Simply put, Kernsdale is the foreign enemy who helps to establish foreign control at the expense of native Islanders. But such commentary escapes the narrator, as he comments: "I am pointing out that he was no coward, in order that you may appreciate what happens later on."<sup>78</sup> As another example of this bravery, the narrator recounts how Kernsdale once pulled a seven-inch long centipede — an "ugly venomous devil" — out of a woman's hair. The adoring narrator even calls the creature "as

horrible and heroic a sight as man could wish to see.”<sup>79</sup> Kernsdale is bitten twice and “[t]he next morning [his] arm was as big as a barrel, and it was three weeks before the swelling went down.”<sup>80</sup> This story is not told as a mere escapade, the narrator explains, but is relayed “in order to show that Jack Kernsdale was anything but a coward.”<sup>81</sup> Establishing Kernsdale as brave and fearless, the narrator hopes to foreground his bravery in order to rationalize Kernsdale’s later actions. Unlike Koolau, however, whose heroism comes from decisive life-threatening battles against oppression, Kernsdale’s “boldness” is the superficial fare of anecdotes and leisurely afternoons at Kona bungalows.

“Good-By, Jack,” and its counterpart, “The Sheriff of Kona,” are both notable within *The House of Pride* for their narrative point of view. Only in these two stories does London craft a first-person narrative. In “Good-By, Jack,” the choice of “Jack” as Kernsdale’s first name is an obvious link to the author, but there are other telling connections between the writer and his creation. Both Kernsdale and London have a strong interest in leprosy, and this knowledge is what draws the narrator to Kernsdale. He explains: “I was interested in leprosy, and upon that, as upon every other island subject, Kernsdale had encyclopedic knowledge. In fact, leprosy was one of his hobbies.”<sup>82</sup> From Kernsdale, the narrator attempts to receive elucidation on leprosy and its effects. The narrator expresses the popular opinion: “There was much talk and feeling among the natives, fanned by the demagogues, concerning the cruelties of Molokai, where men and women, not alone banished from friends and family, were compelled to live in perpetual imprisonment until they died.”<sup>83</sup> As “an ardent defender of the settlement at Molokai,” Kernsdale disagrees with this viewpoint and tells the narrator:

‘I tell you they are happy there.... And they are infinitely better off than their friends and relatives outside who have nothing the matter with them. The horrors of Molokai are all poppycock.... They have nothing to do but have a good time. Food, shelter, clothes, medical attendance, everything, is theirs. They are the wards of the Territory. They have a much finer climate than Honolulu, and the scenery is magnificent. I shouldn’t mind going down there myself for the rest of my days. It is a lovely spot.’<sup>84</sup>

These striking statements from this “Jack” sound a great deal like those of London himself, who claims in *The Cruise of the Snark* that “the horrors of Molokai, as they have been painted in the past, do not exist.”<sup>85</sup> Like London, Kernsdale is eager to dispel common notions about Molokai and disprove the claims made by those like Koolau who view Molokai as a prison. For both “Jacks,” such justification may be a means of assuaging foreign guilt over the importation of disease and formation of the settlement. But there are other parallels; London is also allied with his character in their apparent irreverence towards leprosy. The narrator says of

Kernsdale: "He was not afraid of leprosy. He said so himself, and that there wasn't one chance in a million for him or any other white man to catch it."<sup>86</sup> Similarly, London writes in *The Cruise of the Snark*: "Leprosy is not as contagious as is imagined. I went for a week's visit to the Settlement [at Molokai], and I took my wife along — all of which would not have happened had we had any apprehension of contracting the disease."<sup>87</sup> These two "white" characters, then, harbor no fear of a disease that appears to threaten only racial "Others." For Jack Kernsdale and Jack London, Molokai is an acceptable place of segregation, and leprosy is therefore not a concern for any *haoles* on the Islands. Moreover, in creating a character who echoes his own opinions, London inadvertently offers a self-critique in his portrayal of Kernsdale's final act.

To prove his thesis that the lepers sent to Molokai are indeed happy, Kernsdale invites the narrator to the dock as a ship leaves for the colony. He tells the narrator:

I'll show you the saddest aspect of the whole situation — the lepers wailing as they depart for Molokai. The [ship] will be taking them on board in a few minutes. But let me warn you not to let your feelings be harrowed. Real as their grief is, they'd wail a whole sight harder a year hence if the Board of Health tried to take them away from Molokai.<sup>88</sup>

Unlike Kernsdale, who watches the lepers with a cool, unemotional eye, the narrator is shocked by those departing the harbor. He describes the scene: "The lepers were a woebegone lot. The faces of the majority were hideous — too horrible for me to describe. But here and there I noticed fairly good-looking persons, with no apparent signs of the fell disease upon them."<sup>89</sup> One of these people bound for Molokai catches the narrator's attention. He writes: "She was a beautiful woman, and she was pure Polynesian.... Her lines and proportions were magnificent, and she was just beginning to show the amplitude of the women of her race."<sup>90</sup> Dr. Georges identifies her as "'Lucy Mokunui.... The Hawaiian nightingale!'"<sup>91</sup> He also tells the narrator: "'A dozen *haoles* — I beg your pardon, white men — have lost their hearts to her at one time or another. And I'm not counting in the ruck. The dozen I refer to were *haoles* of position and prominence.... She could have married the son of the Chief Justice if she'd wanted to.'"<sup>92</sup> Important to the doctor and other *haoles* is that Lucy is "pure Polynesian" — not the product of Pacific racial mixing. In addition, she is assessed through her relation to devoted "white" suitors, which casts her plight as even more tragic. The final scenes are the most demonstrative, as the narrator describes the leper's farewell: "It was the last time they would behold the faces of their loved ones, for they were the living dead, being carted away in the funeral ship to the graveyard of Molokai.... At once the wailing started from those behind the rope. It was blood-curdling; it was heartrending. I never heard such woe, and I hope never to again."<sup>93</sup> In the face of

this suffering, Kernsdale is unaffected. As he returns to the dock, “his lips could not quite hide the smile of delight that was his.”<sup>94</sup> As Slagel puts it, Kernsdale “takes a perverse pleasure in watching the patients deported from Honolulu harbor.”<sup>95</sup>

A harsh moment of recognition and terror jars Kernsdale’s complacency. As Lucy departs, she passes Kernsdale and cries “‘Good-by, Jack!’”<sup>96</sup> Kernsdale’s reaction is revealing. The narrator relates: “Never was a man overtaken by more crushing fear. He reeled on the stringer piece, his face went white to the roots of his hair, and he seemed to shrink and wither inside his clothes.”<sup>97</sup> He waves quickly to Lucy, but when the steamer is gone, Kernsdale flees immediately to Doctor Hervey — the local medical expert and administrator of the bacteriological leprosy test. Telling the carriage driver to go faster and faster, Kernsdale leaves the dock in a panic “with trembling hands wiping the sweat away.”<sup>98</sup> Kernsdale’s obvious fear is that through contact with Lucy, he may have become infected with leprosy. Casting Lucy as both beautiful and disfigured, London represents the “desire and fear” central to colonial “ambivalence.”<sup>99</sup> Kernsdale finally shows little concern for Lucy, however, nor does he bemoan the departure of this woman with whom he apparently enjoyed some intimacy. His anxiety is purely egocentric and has “racial” undertones important for the story’s conclusion.

Eric Cheyfitz has argued that Western imperialism “necessitates the construction of others as an absolutely opposition, completely homogeneous, and ultimately superfluous figure, rather than as figures in a possible dialogue of equals.”<sup>100</sup> Through leprosy, white colonizers on Hawaii were able to treat the Hawaiian as Other since, in addition to a darker skin color, the disease primarily disfigured only those of Polynesian descent. Such binary segregation is undercut, however, when the possibility of a *haole* becoming infected is raised. Bhabha calls skin “the most visible of fetishes,”<sup>101</sup> and Kernsdale’s fear that he may now show the skin disfigurement of an Other group shakes his previously steadfast belief that lepers were happy on Molokai. He had said earlier: “‘I shouldn’t mind going down there for the rest of my days’”;<sup>102</sup> but his reaction to Lucy’s infection belies this statement. His alarm, then, is that if infected, he might become one of these racial Others banished to Molokai. Sent to a place this wealthy white man and his colonizing culture have attempted to rationalize will merge him with this Other group and destroy the racial and cultural difference he has sought to preserve. For this same reason, Tommo must flee Nukuheva when threatened with a tattoo, and Stoddard’s narrator must quickly depart Molokai under cover of darkness. As a result of such fears in “Good-By, Jack,” leprosy raises an even greater concern than mere racial mixing in “The House of Pride,” “Chun Ah Chun,” and “Aloha Oe.” Here, banishment to Molokai would force Kernsdale to face imprisonment as an Other and collapse his status as privileged Subject. Moreover, if infected, he will have to bear



the cultural "punishment" for miscegenation — a punishment he is obviously unprepared to accept. Clearly, Kernsdale is not the hero the narrator attempts to make of him. In fact, his echoing of London's own views on leprosy may represent London's own unexpressed fear of the disease and his realization of its effect on the Hawaiian Islands.

The final story in *The House of Pride*, "The Sheriff of Kona," offers a deeper exploration of leprosy's effects on a white character. Here, the *haole's* fear of leprosy, expressed only through a Polynesian warrior in "Koolau" and as a frightening possibility in "Good-By, Jack," is realized, as a white man contracts the dreaded disease. Moreover, the prime concern of the white colonizer — transformation into the Other — creates an awkward reality, and the conclusion of the story shows just how far a white character, his friends, and even an American writer will go to save one of their own from a life at Molokai. The story begins as another first-person narrator discusses the beauty of the Islands with longtime American resident John Cudworth. Their particular fascination is Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii. Cudworth tells the narrator: "You cannot escape liking the climate... [a]nd I warn you, if you have some spot dear to you on earth, not to linger here too long, else you will find this dearer."<sup>103</sup> Cudworth and the narrator continue praising this "lotus land" of "perpetual calm,"<sup>104</sup> but as much as these two love Kona, Cudworth claims: "There was another man who loved it, even as I. I think he loved it more for he was born here on the Kona coast... But he left it, and he did not die."<sup>105</sup> This man, Lyte Gregory, or the Sheriff of Kona, is the subject of Cudworth's story. Physically, he was an impressive man, as the Cudworth explains: "he was straight American stock, but he was built like the chieftains of old Hawaii... He was the strongest man I have ever seen. He was an athlete and a giant. He was a god."<sup>106</sup> But even this robust, healthy man is not invincible, as Cudworth laments: "And then it happened. The mark of the beast was laid upon him."<sup>107</sup> The "mark," of course, is the beginning stages of leprosy.

Because of his authoritative status, Gregory's leprosy is not public knowledge, however. In fact, only three men are aware of his infection: his friend Cudworth, Doc Strowbridge, and "that cursed *hapa-haole*, Stephen Kaluna."<sup>108</sup> Even Gregory himself is unaware. Friction arises because of the animosity between Kaluna and Gregory, and a confrontation is catalyzed by Kaluna's clandestine knowledge. When Kaluna's sister is suspected of infection with leprosy, he quickly hides her before Doc Strowbridge can conduct an examination. As Sheriff, it was Gregory's "business to find her."<sup>109</sup> One night in Hilo, Kaluna confronts Gregory to express his displeasure over his sister's fugitive status. Cudworth describes the scene: "Kaluna spat contemptuously on the floor. Lyte noticed, so did everybody; but he ignored the fellow. Kaluna was looking for trouble. He took it as a personal grudge that Lyte was trying to apprehend his sister."<sup>110</sup> Cudworth

realizes the difficulty of Lyte's job as he explains: "It is not a nice thing to go into a man's house and tear away a father, mother, or child, who has done no wrong, and to send such a one to perpetual banishment on Molokai. Of course, it is necessary as a protection to society, and Lyte, I do believe, would have been the first to apprehend his own father did he become suspect."<sup>111</sup> Unable to instigate a confrontation with the Sheriff, Kaluna challenges him directly:

'I'll tell you one thing... You'll be on Molokai yourself before ever you get Kalaniweo there. I'll tell you what you are. You have no right to be in the company of honest men. You've made a terrible fuss talking about your duty haven't you? You've sent many lepers to Molokai, and knowing all the time you belonged there yourself.'<sup>112</sup>

Cudworth explains: "Leprosy with us, you know, is not a thing to jest about. He made one leap across the floor, dragging Kaluna out of his chair with a clutch on his neck. He shook him back and forth savagely, till you could hear the half-caste's teeth rattling."<sup>113</sup> Kaluna finally accosts Gregory with his knowledge: "'I'll tell you what I mean. You are a leper yourself.'<sup>114</sup> Gregory is in disbelief and accuses his friends of carrying out a "good joke."<sup>115</sup> Cudworth temporarily calls it a hoax to protect his friend, but Kaluna quickly confirms: "It is no joke."<sup>116</sup> He tells Gregory to look at himself in the glass, asserting: "'You're developing the lion face. See where the skin is darkened there over your eyes.'<sup>117</sup> Still in disbelief, Gregory exclaims: "'You have a black heart Kaluna. And I am not ashamed to say that you have given me a scare that a no man has a right to give another.'<sup>118</sup> After Gregory scans his friends' faces for confirmation or denial, Cudworth says: "Suddenly, with a most horrible, malignant expression he drove his fist into Kaluna's face. He followed it up. We made no attempt to separate them. We didn't care if he killed the half-caste. It was a terrible beating."<sup>119</sup> The others' callousness here is telling. Kaluna does not want to see his sister join others in his family who were deported to Molokai. But unlike Koolau, who is praised for his resistance and self-assertion, Kaluna is cast as racially and morally inferior — a mere "half-caste" deserving a beating. Soon hereafter, his friends try to convince Gregory not to go to Molokai, but Cudworth explains: "He had sent too many to Molokai to hang back himself. We argued for Japan. But he wouldn't hear of it. 'I've got to take my medicine, fellows,' was all he would say."<sup>120</sup> Now more than just the prospect suggested at the conclusion of "Good-By, Jack," leprosy in a white character is verified and his deportation to Molokai is assured.

With the detection of Gregory's leprosy, the story, and, in effect, the entire collection, reaches a crucial point. This discovery actualizes the threat of becoming the Other, and the Sheriff of Kona must confront the fate which he has foisted upon many terrified Islanders. For Cudworth and Gregory's friends, however, the

Sheriff's deportation is unacceptable. Since Gregory "didn't get on well" on Molokai, the narrator visits the colony in an attempt to convince his friend to shirk his responsibility and escape. When Gregory refuses to flee from Molokai, Cudworth and his cohorts charter a schooner to take Gregory away. Once they find him at night in the "settlement of over a thousand lepers,"<sup>121</sup> Gregory does not resist or exhibit his previous willingness to accept his fate. Rather, he tells the group: "I thought you fellows would never come.... I'm ready to go now. I've had nine months of it."<sup>122</sup> After a daring rescue fraught with resistance from other lepers, the group succeeds in "liberating" the Sheriff. But Gregory cannot return to Kona, and the story closes by providing a glimpse into Gregory's fate. Cudworth tells the narrator:

"You're going to Shanghai. You look Lyte Gregory up. He is employed in a German firm there. Take him out to dinner. Open up wine. Give him everything of the best, but don't let him pay for anything. Send the bill to me. His wife and kids are in Honolulu, and he needs the money for them. I know. He sends most of his salary, and lives like an anchorite. And tell him about Kona. There's where his heart is. Tell him all you can about Kona."<sup>123</sup>

Unlike Koolau, who is hunted mercilessly for avoiding the prison at Molokai, or Lucy, who is sent with parting tears and little personal concern from Kernsdale, Gregory is excused for his desire to avoid imprisonment at the settlement. In Cudworth's closing words, we are left only with an image of the Sheriff as a generous, caring husband and supportive father. Never is the hypocrisy of his escape from Molokai or its implications for a white writer and his audience examined.

Toni Morrison argues that "a breakdown in the logic and machinery of plot construction implies the powerful impact race has on narrative — and on narrative strategy."<sup>124</sup> Morrison's claim illustrates the difficulties and contradictions which London must have faced as he composed and concluded "The Sheriff of Kona." Having argued in *The Cruise of the Snark* that Molokai was not replete with the horrors attributed to it — an opinion shared by his character Jack Kernsdale — London reaches an impasse when creating a *haole* character infected with the deadly disease. None of the stories in *The House of Pride* have posited any long-term possibilities for harmony between native Hawaiians and foreigners, and, predictably, "The Sheriff of Kona" joins this pattern of racial elision. Faced with a legal obligation to remain on Molokai, where he has sent many Islanders, Gregory seizes upon the opportunity for escape with striking alacrity. Like Kernsdale, Gregory is terrified by the possibility of joining the colony at Molokai and watching the racial difference marked by his skin color dissolve. As a result, Cudworth and his group risk their own lives and furiously attack lepers in order to secure Gregory's escape. Because no alternative to racial segregation has been

broached in the collection, sending a “white” character to live among racial Others is resisted vigorously by this story. Racial questions in the text are also mirrored by historical events of the period, since the early twentieth century was a particularly volatile time in America. For instance, a significant race riot occurred in Atlanta in 1906, followed in 1908 by an anti-Negro riot in Springfield, Illinois, within half a mile of Abraham Lincoln’s home. Such militant activity reflected the social unrest and racial conflict visible in America, and was instrumental in formation of the NAACP in 1909.<sup>125</sup> This historical and cultural tension clearly informs the stories assembled in *The House of Pride*. None of London’s *haole* characters can accept giving up privileged “white” status, and, like other stories in the collection, “The Sheriff of Kona” violently defers careful consideration of race on the Hawaiian Islands or in early-twentieth-century America.

My analysis of the stories assembled in *The House of Pride* does not attempt to speculate on London’s intent in fictionalizing the Hawaiian Islands. Instead, I argue that we must consider the reciprocal relationship between his text and its early-twentieth-century cultural milieu. As many have documented, London did care deeply for Hawaiians and their culture, and he often sympathetically presented their problems with ruthless capitalist colonizers and foreign-born leprosy. Hawaii possessed a larger space in the American imagination than London’s literary empathy could address, however. In 1890, the census bureau made its famous declaration that the Western frontier was now closed — a limitation far more permanent than that faced during the publication of Twain’s *Letters from Hawaii* or Stoddard’s *South-Sea Idyls*. With opportunities for expansion therefore limited, Hawaii became an attractive commodity — a fact made salient in London’s fiction. Discussing London’s *The People of the Abyss*, Robert Peluso explains: “If new discursive formations celebrating U.S. superiority were needed to legitimize and actualize American expansionism, then Jack London’s willingness to provide them could only have been reinforced by his complex relation to the marketplace.”<sup>126</sup> Of course, London’s connection to the marketplace is itself multifaceted. Jonathan Auerbach has aptly deemed London’s assiduous and pragmatic approach to writing “a kind of literary Taylorism,”<sup>127</sup> and part of the unity of *The House of Pride* arises simply from London’s recognizing serviceable connections between these sometimes-disparate stories that would lead to a publishable collection. But in failing to offer alternatives to Dorothy Sambrooke’s departure for America, or Lyte Gregory’s escape to Shanghai, London indirectly reinforces a perceived American superiority — an attitude that fed American colonialism. Moreover, in these literary expressions, London mirrors the racial beliefs of his time, which prohibit anything more than tourism-based cultural interaction. Susan Nuernberg explains: “London’s ideas and attitudes on race in general... as expressed in his fiction and essays, mirror those held by the majority of well-educated and promi-

nent Americans prior to World War II."<sup>128</sup> Though London clearly respected Hawaii and its culture, his fictional deployment of the Islanders ultimately supports American racial ideas of the period. Instead of true cultural interaction and mutual education, racial separation and absentee control of the islands are offered as the only viable options for Hawaii. This deeply embedded sentiment of inequality leads directly to Hawaii's place in twentieth-century American society.

With his popularity and attention to the details of Hawaii's riches, London's collection had an even deeper colonial impact on the Islands than he could have anticipated. His island depictions led to an increase in tourism, foreshadowing deeper American influence and Hawaiian dependence. Reesman argues that "[p]art of the reason for London's enormous popularity was his facility for bringing new subjects to the magazine-reading public *and* letting these subjects speak for themselves."<sup>129</sup> With his vivid representations of the new American territory, public interest in the Islands' riches was piqued. Labor explains that upon returning to Hawaii in 1915: "The London's discovered to their mixed delight and discomfort — thanks in part to Jack's own widely published praise of the Islands — Hawaii was no longer unknown to the tourists;"<sup>130</sup> and continues: "Ironically, despite such accusations [against London by the *Honolulu Advertiser*], Jack's writings about Hawaii were responsible in considerable measure for the increase in tourism over the following decade."<sup>131</sup> At the turn of the century, Hawaii was annexed by the United States for reasons that continued to inform this increase in tourism.<sup>132</sup> In an influential 1897 piece appearing in the *North American Review* entitled "Advantages of Hawaiian Annexation," Arthur Curtis James argues that the Islands are desirable because they possess "a climate simply perfect... are capable of producing all the sugar and coffee which the country can consume... [and] would provide us with three excellent harbors."<sup>133</sup> The results of this expansionist thinking were devastating for Hawaiian Islanders, and the effects are visible today. Noel Kent claims that like many Caribbean Islands, Hawaii has become a "society economically dependent on tourism"<sup>134</sup> and continues: "Resentment [towards foreign-run tourism] is nurtured by the loss of access to land, by the debasement of Polynesian culture — now we see the culture of the 'plastic lei.'"<sup>135</sup> London did not consciously hope for such a negative impact on the Islands, but his text functioned within a complex cultural environment of limited land and increased capitalist demands that has led to Hawaii's current dependent status. American traveler Charles Nordhoff wrote in 1874: "It is one of the embarrassing incidents of travel on these Islands that there are no hotels or inns outside of Honolulu and Hilo."<sup>136</sup> Because of the indirect influence of works such as *The House of Pride*, hotel space on the Islands is no longer a concern for tourists, and London's greatest gift to Hawaii may be his documentation of their culture's decline. In his work we find the culmination of the imperialism that began with Columbus,

persisted through the Puritans, looked abroad in the nineteenth century, and continued into the twentieth.

## NOTES

1. Charmian London, *The Log of the Snark* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), vii.
2. Jack London, *The Cruise of the Snark* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 1.
3. Jack London, *Cruise*, 1.
4. Jack London, *Cruise*, 1-2.
5. Jack London, *Cruise*, 16. London himself realizes that sailing the *Snark* in this condition was a gamble, but he explains: "I am at the end of my resources. I've got to put up with the present *Snark* or quit—and I can't quit" (*Cruise*, 35). In fact, he knows that in Honolulu, the *Snark* will most likely need to be "rebuilt" (*Cruise*, 24).
6. Jack London, *Cruise*, 154-6.
7. Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in the Valley of the Marquesas* (New York: Signet, 1964), 28, 87.
8. London, *Cruise*, 167.
9. See Dana Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading 'Race' in American Literature, 1638-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Nelson often places terms such as "black," "white," and "race" in quotation marks to highlight their "arbitrary constructedness" as literary, cultural, and colonial metaphors.
10. London, *Cruise*, 177.
11. James I. McClintock, *White Logic: Jack London's Short Stories* (Cedar Springs, Michigan: Wolf House Books, 1976), 132.
12. While the individual stories in *The House of Pride* have not received a great deal of critical attention, those in *On the Makaloa Mat* have been the subject of numerous fascinating critical studies. The stories "The Bones of Kahelili," "When Alice Sold Her Soul," "Shin Bones," "The Tears of Ah Kim," and "The Water Baby," all written after Jack and Charmian's second trip to Hawaii, were influenced in particular by Jack's reading of Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*. This inspiration is so strong that Earle Labor and Jeanne Campbell Reesman claim that "The Water Baby" must "be recognized as the final testament to [London's] spiritual as well as communal vision" and call the story "one of the most revealing pieces of fiction he ever created." Earle Labor and Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *Jack London: Revised Edition* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 124. See also McClintock, 158-74 for a discussion of these stories. Similarly, Reesman also argues that the increased "richness" and "complexity" of *On the Makaloa Mat* is the result of London's Summer 1916 reading of Jung. Jeanne Campbell Reesman, "The Problem of Knowledge in Jack London's 'The Water Baby,'" *Western American Literature* 23 (November 1988): 202. In my treatment of his Hawaii stories, I focus much less on London's style and influences than on the social and historical context surrounding *The House of Pride*.
13. The six stories in the collection originally appeared in magazines ranging from *Woman's Magazine* to *Pacific Monthly* between December 1908 and December 1910.

14. For a fascinating discussion of Melville as imperialist influence on America, see John Carlos Rowe, "Melville's *Typee*: U.S. Imperialism at Home and Abroad," in *Nationalist Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives*, ed. Donald Pease (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1994). See also my "'I saw everything but could comprehend nothing': The Collapse of Colonial Stereotyping in Melville's *Typee*," *Lamar Journal of the Humanities* 21 (Spring 1995): 19-36.
15. Jack London, *The House of Pride and Other Tales of Hawaii* (New York: MacMillan, 1912), 3.
16. Jack London, *House*, 6.
17. Jack London, *House*, 11.
18. Jack London, *House*, 25.
19. Jack London, *House*, 26.
20. Jack London, *House*, 41.
21. Jack London, *House*, 42.
22. Jack London, *House*, 43.
23. Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985) 272.
24. David M. Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 59.
25. Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism." Chap. in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67.
26. Jack London, *House*, 15-16.
27. Jack London, *House*, 20.
28. Jack London, *House*, 128.
29. Jack London, *House*, 131-2.
30. Jack London, *House*, 138.
31. Jack London, *House*, 142.
32. Jack London, *House*, 143.
33. Jack London, *House*, 130.
34. Quoted in Wrobel, 60.
35. Jack London, *House*, 155.
36. Jack London, *House*, 157.
37. Jack London, *House*, 179.
38. Jack London, *House*, 179.
39. Andrew Furer, "'Zone-Conquerors' and 'White Devils': The Contradictions of Race in the Works of Jack London," in *Rereading Jack London*, ed. Leonard Cassuto and Jeanne Campbell Reesman (Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 1996), 164.
40. Jack London, *House* 183.
41. Jack London, *House*, 171-3.
42. Jack London, *House*, 184.
43. Jack London, *House*, 188.
44. Jack London, *House*, 189.
45. Noel J. Kent, *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 70.

46. Ralph S. Kuykendall and A. Grove Day, *Hawaii: A History from Polynesian Kingdom to American Commonwealth* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1949), 156.
47. Writing during an 1874 visit to the Islands, Charles Nordhoff notes: "Leprosy, when it is beyond its very earliest stage is held to be incurable. He who is sent to Molokai is therefore adjudged civilly dead." *Northern California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands* (1874; reprint, Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1995), 101 (page references are to reprint edition).
48. David A. Moreland, "The Author as Hero: Jack London's *The Cruise of the Snark*," *Jack London Newsletter* 15 (January-April 1982): 64.
49. Jack London, *Cruise*, 97.
50. Jack London, *Cruise*, 105.
51. James Lundquist, *Jack London: Adventures, Ideas, Fiction* (New York: Ungar, 1987), 185.
52. Jack London, *House* 47.
53. Jack London, *House*, 48.
54. Jack London, *House*, 54.
55. Furer, 167.
56. Jack London, *House*, 49-50.
57. Howard L. Malchow, *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 231.
58. Jack London, *House*, 56.
59. Jack London, *House*, 157
60. Jack London, *House*, 60-1.
61. Jack London, *House*, 61.
62. Jack London, *House*, 63.
63. Jack London, *House*, 65.
64. Jack London, *House*, 70.
65. Jack London, *House*, 77-8.
66. Jack London, *House*, 83-4.
67. Jack London, *House*, 84.
68. Jack London, *House*, 88.
69. Jack London, *House*, 89.
70. Jack London, *House*, 91.
71. Labor and Reesman, 88.
72. Jack London, "A Piece of Steak," in *To Build a Fire and Other Stories* (New York: Bantam, 1988), 266.
73. See Jeanne Campbell Reesman, "'Never Travel Alone': Naturalism, Jack London, and the White Silence," *American Literary Realism* 29 (Winter 1997): 39. See also Labor and Reesman, 87.
74. Furer, 168.
75. Lunquist, 164.
76. Jack London, *House*, 98.
77. Jack London, *House*, 48.
78. Jack London, *House*, 99.
79. Jack London, *House*, 99.
80. Jack London, *House*, 102.
81. Jack London, *House*, 102.



82. Jack London, *House*, 103.
83. Jack London, *House*, 103.
84. Jack London, *House*, 104.
85. Jack London, *House*, 104-5.
86. Jack London, *Cruise*, 94.
87. Jack London, *House*, 105.
88. Jack London, *Cruise*, 95.
89. Jack London, *House*, 109.
90. Jack London, *House*, 110.
91. Jack London, *House*, 112-13.
92. Jack London, *House*, 114.
93. Jack London, *House*, 115.
94. Jack London, *House*, 118.
95. Jack London, *House*, 119.
96. James Slagel, "Political Leprosy: Jack London the 'Kama'aina' and Koolau the Hawaiian," in Cassuto and Reesman, 187.
97. Jack London, *House*, 120.
98. Jack London, *House*, 120.
99. Jack London, *House*, 122.
100. Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," in *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Edited by Margaret L. Carter (Ann Arbor and London: UMI Research Press, 1988), 171.
101. Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991), 109. Cheyfitz provides a detailed discussion of how language is used in colonial relations.
102. Bhabha, 82.
103. Jack London, *House*, 105.
104. Jack London, *House*, 193.
105. Jack London, *House*, 195-6.
106. Jack London, *House*, 199.
107. Jack London, *House*, 200-1.
108. Jack London, *House*, 211-12.
109. Jack London, *House*, 212.
110. Jack London, *House*, 213.
111. Jack London, *House*, 214.
112. Jack London, *House*, 214.
113. Jack London, *House*, 215.
114. Jack London, *House*, 215.
115. Jack London, *House*, 216.
116. Jack London, *House*, 217.
117. Jack London, *House*, 219.
118. Jack London, *House*, 220.
119. Jack London, *House*, 221.
120. Jack London, *House*, 222.
121. Jack London, *House*, 223-4.
122. Jack London, *House*, 227.
123. Jack London, *House*, 227.

124. Jack London, *House*, 231-2.
125. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1992), 25.
126. Arthur S. Link, *American Epoch: A History of the United States since the 1890s*, 2d ed. (New York: Knopf, 1963), 31-2.
127. Robert Peluso, "Gazing at Royalty: Jack London's 'The People of the Abyss' and the Emergence of American Imperialism," in Cassuto and Reesman, 55-74.
128. Jonathan Auerbach, *Male Call: Becoming Jack London* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 22. Focusing on London's earlier writing, Auerbach does not discuss his Hawaii fiction, but his claim that developing a "name" and reputation (like Mark Twain before him) was a central part of London's "honing the craft of magazine submission" (31) helps to explain some of the lack of unity in *The House of Pride*.
129. Susan Marie Nuernberg, "The Call of Kind: Race in Jack London's Fiction" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Massachusetts, 1989), vi.
130. Reesman, "Travel," 39.
131. Earle Labor, "Jack London's Pacific World," in *Critical Essays on Jack London*, ed. Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1983), 216.
132. Labor, "Pacific," 207.
133. Through annexation, Hawaii became a U.S. Republic in 1898. The Islands were a U.S. Territory from 1900-1959, and the Territory was granted statehood in 1959. See Kuykendall and Day, 183-202 for an interesting discussion of the annexation period and the corresponding politics.
134. Arthur Curtis James, "Advantages of Hawaiian Annexation," *North American Review* 165 (December 1897): 758-59. Focusing on trade and tourism, James also argues that the Islands are important for "the protection of our Pacific coast" and claims that it "is natural that the white man should become the governing power" (759).
135. Kent, 164.
136. Kent, 183.
137. Nordhoff, 66.

# Conclusion

It is difficult to connect these different realms, to show the involvements of culture with expanding empires... but, I submit, we must attempt this.

— Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

“There is not so helpless and pitiable an object in the world,” writes Richard Henry Dana, Jr., in the first chapter of *Two Years Before the Mast*, “as a landsman beginning a sailor’s life.”<sup>1</sup> As the ocean journeys of Dana, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard, and Jack London illustrate, travel by sea was an unpredictable and often harrowing experience that tested the fortitude of these writers turned seamen. Twain, for example, would curse the rolling seas that sent many passengers leaning over the bulwarks, Stoddard would play victim to the “boisterous waves for five long weeks,” and London would lament “rolling in the trough of the sea.” What drove these developing writers — in the case of Melville, Twain, and Stoddard — or established authors — in the case of Dana and London — to seek their literary subject in this volatile, unknown expanse? Roger Stein suggests that such voyages are “metaphysical quests for sublime truth in the sea”<sup>2</sup> — an appropriate connotation for the imaginative space the sea provided both for these travelers and their fellow Americans on land. Bert Bender expounds: “As every literal or literary voyager’s embarking is an implicit act of faith, the long series of voyages that constitutes the tradition of American sea fiction has contributed a sense of affirmation and hope to American writing.”<sup>3</sup> Connected to the sea from its earliest “discovery,” America has consistently looked to the water for reflection, freedom, and potential — all essential traits of the American mindset. As Nina Baym writes: “[water is] cleansing, refreshing, forever moving between heaven and earth, transparent, working often unseen and unknown.”<sup>4</sup> In these nautical journeys, then, adventurous American authors became chroniclers, and the ocean became a path to artistic inspiration.

When the ocean traveler arrives on foreign land, however, the creative situation changes dramatically. Here, contact with various cultures, particularly those

classified as Other, shapes the writer's response to the sea, land, and people. At this point, with the author disembarked, "[t]he border between factual and fictional voyages can easily be crossed,"<sup>5</sup> and the formation of the writer's identity through interaction with the island, in all its forms, begins to take place. Annette Kolodny elaborates on the spaces these travelers found: "[we must] recognize 'frontier' as a locus of first cultural contact, circumscribed by a particular physical terrain in the process of change because of the forms that contact takes, all of it inscribed by the collisions and interpenetrations of language."<sup>6</sup> As America sought new frontiers upon which to test and assert its developing identity, the Marquesas, Cuba, and Hawaii served as dreamlike, extraterritorial expanses through which authors would witness and assess cultural contact. In this sense, the colonial project shaped and defined not only the writers I have studied, but the entire nation as well. Through writing, authors explore their own personal and national identities as they encounter physical frontiers abroad; At the same time, nations find their concerns, fears, and stereotypes reflected back at them through the language of literary art. Ultimately, this extraterritorial nature of the "minor" works I have examined may offer readers an indispensable starting point for investigating the "major" works of these important authors.

If we link the formation of the major American writer with the construction of a national literature of expansion, then Melville's *Typee* is a particularly fruitful starting point. Like Dana, who upon disembarking the *Pilgrim* wrote: "I shall never forget the delightful sensation of being in the open air, with the birds signing around me"<sup>7</sup>; Melville, too, was exuberant about the possibility of leaving the *Dolly* to explore the Marquesas. But what did Melville, and nineteenth-century America, hope to find in the South Seas? Of course, as someone with modest literary aspirations, an adventure on an exotic Pacific island would provide him with the necessary ammunition for a successful assault on the literary market. For the young nation, Melville's adventure presented a means through which it could explore contact with the Other outside the confines of American soil. In Fayaway, Kory-Kory, and the rest of the Typee tribe, the country found both attraction and repulsion — central tenets of colonial ambivalence. Moreover, Melville's literary excursion was part of the cultural, military, and artistic process through which America developed a sense of its identity as potential imperial power capable of asserting Anglo-Saxon "superiority" over those perceived as inferior. For Melville, this encounter with the Other was equally complex and influential. Clearly enamored with Typee society during his stay, he nonetheless found the need to flee existence among the Other and return home when the threat of cultural assimilation arose. By articulating these contradictions about race and imperialism in antebellum America, he wrote as much about the difficulties of racial coexistence in the United States as he did cultural contact in the Marquesas. For

Melville and America, the Other allowed exploration of the “dark” underside of the country’s ostensible freedom, liberty, and equality. Captured by those he and his culture view as inferior, the surprisingly efficient function of Typee society problematizes the place of the Other in our national cultural framework — foregrounding debates about race that would persist into the twentieth century. Addressing this formative travel and literary treatment of race, I believe, is also essential for understanding Melville’s “big” books. As both a cultural marker and metaphorical device, “race” plays a prominent role in many of Melville’s later works, including *Moby-Dick* and “Benito Cereno” — making *Typee* “the key to fit into the lock of the complications” that Melville would explore throughout his career.

As an established writer and professional attorney by the time of his visit to Cuba in 1859, Dana had other reasons and different expectations for his foreign travels. Embarking not as an ordinary sailor, but as first-class passenger, he reflects a clear shift into a culture of leisure and the emergence of an affluent class in late nineteenth-century America. Once in Havana, his travel descriptions highlight the contradictions inherent in the developing class system. As a founding member of the Free Soil Party, he located in Cuba all that his party had rallied against — particularly a plantation system fueled by slavery. His reaction to what he views, however, clearly echoes the stifling cultural milieu in which he wrote. Amy Kaplan argues: “imperialism as a political or economic process abroad is inseparable from the social relations and cultural discourses of race, gender, ethnicity, and class at home.”<sup>8</sup> Living in a culture that sanctioned slavery, denouncing it in his travels to Cuba would have alienated Dana from capitalist readers; he therefore adopts a neutral tone when considering the contentious issue in Cuba. As an established lawyer, he is able to return comfortably to home and practice once his journey is complete, never having to confront slavery directly again. But his text has left deeper impressions on American culture. Locating himself as more of a capitalist than a Free-Soiler, Dana expresses the attractiveness of the thriving plantation system for American readers. Through his travel monograph, the country is able to defer anxieties over slavery, equality, and nationhood — issues that reemerge after the Civil War in the work of Twain. However, as a colonial text, *To Cuba and Back* may also help us to understand Dana’s major work, *Two Years Before the Mast*. Though traditionally studied as a major work in the seafaring and travel genres, an additional facet of *Two Years* may be its power as a promotional tract for additional colonization of California. Such a supplementary cultural function becomes fully visible only with a corresponding study of *To Cuba and Back*.

Like Dana a few years before him, Twain’s travels were motivated partly by business interests and a genuine concern for the reception of his work at home. But, unlike Dana, Twain was far from an established author and successful

businessman when he embarked, so his ocean journey was, like Melville's, as much about finding a literary identity as it was helping America to uncover its burgeoning nationhood. Twain had been known early in his career for humorous tales set in California, but desired a much wider readership and reputation. His letters reporting on Hawaii for the *Sacramento Union* helped him to build such a national name for himself. Though his journalistic letter detailing the rescue of the *Hornet* survivors earned a place on the front page of many major newspapers, his popular "voice" is much more apparent in other letters describing everyday life on the islands. In particular, Twain's emerging humor is often cautiously linked to his discussion of the importance of trade between Hawaii and the United States. In this regard, the use of Mr. Brown is a central aspect of Twain's early "multiform humor."<sup>9</sup> Florence notes: "Brown's remarks are often pointed and funny, replete with frontier vitality... [but] Twain's use of Brown leads to predictability."<sup>10</sup> Twain grew artistically to overcome this literary triteness and become a much stronger humorist than he reveals in his *Letters from Hawaii*. In this apprenticeship, however, Mr. Brown and his rough humor served a purpose for Twain, as he attempted to carve a literary space for himself in the nineteenth century. Maturing quickly, Twain would drop his realistic alter ego Mr. Brown from his work soon after his Hawaii letters. Though he again used Brown briefly in travel writing for the *Alta California*, by the time Twain developed these letters into *The Innocents Abroad*, Brown was no longer necessary; Mark Twain was now a confident and focused author who had learned extensively from his experience in Hawaii, and the voices of Samuel Clemens and Mr. Brown seem to have been absorbed into this new literary persona.

Twain's time in Hawaii was more than just an opportunity for testing and refining his authorial power. Since his letters were written primarily for business leaders in California, his writing served the concomitant purpose of highlighting Hawaii's enormous economic potential. By presenting the Hawaiian as racially Other and willing to relinquish control of valuable land, Twain was able to put off consideration of the damage caused by imperial incursions, and instead explore race outside the confines of America. These early considerations of race in the free literary space of a California newspaper led to his more probing confrontation of the issue in his masterpieces *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and through understanding Twain's use of "race" when writing about Hawaii, we can better uncover his strategies in these major works. As a result, the inconsistency and struggle that highlight Twain's treatment of race in his Hawaiian writing reveal that the islands were a crucial literary starting point for him. Moreover, for his audience, the discussion of race beyond America allowed exploration of central issues facing the country at home during Reconstruction. Hietala explains: "The expansion to the Pacific was not primarily an expression of American

confidence. Anxiety, not optimism, generally lay behind the quest for land, ports, and markets."<sup>11</sup> Part of this apprehension over savagery, politics, labor, and race is addressed by Twain in his Hawaii letters. He confidently assures America that Hawaii will not corrupt them with cannibalism, that they need not worry about newly freed slaves participating in government, and that labor problems can be solved with the Other as compliant worker. As a result of his letters, Twain not only announced himself to the literary world, he opened Hawaii as an imperial, capitalist, and imaginative space for the developing nation.

As the opening scenes aboard the *Dolly* in *Typee* reveal, sexuality was a significant part of male travel to exotic tropical locales. But when this colonial mode is no longer heterosexual, conflicts within American imperialism arise out of this variation. In his Pacific travels, Charles Warren Stoddard finds the opportunity to explore his identity in a veiled homosexual manner that would have been much more difficult in the Victorian United States. Through his *South-Sea Idyls*, we see further representation of and grappling with the Other in literature. Particularly noteworthy are his presentations of bloodsucking and leprosy. Through his metaphorical sucking of blood from Hua Manu in "Pearl-Hunting," Stoddard's narrator is able to express a heretofore obscured homosexuality. Bhabha has argued that "[t]here is a conspiracy of silence around colonial truth,"<sup>12</sup> but, oddly, the literal bloodsucking from Hua Manu breaks this colonial silence. American imperial interests abroad were truly detrimental to native islanders, and Stoddard's text communicates this truth, both indirectly and overtly. Moreover, in his treatment of leprosy as both physical and social disease, he further exposes the Westerner's imperial power as debilitating external force. For Stoddard, however, touring the South Seas was not a conquering mission, but a way to accumulate material for a book as he indulged his sexual desires. But the text cannot escape the power of its time period, for in *South-Sea Idyls*, the obvious American concern over miscegenation, and tacit preoccupation with homosexuality, are ultimately punished severely. All of the homosexual, Polynesian males with whom the narrator carries on affairs are killed in the text, providing the narrator, and America, with convenient disposal of the results of their colonial activities abroad. For the nation, Stoddard's work continued to reveal the power that lay behind imperialism, and he develops the South Seas as an imperial space beyond what his friend Mark Twain had done by truly casting the Polynesian as Other through debilitating leprosy. For Stoddard, however, this was his first and last "major" work — a fact that reveals how America's views of homosexuality could severely limit the career of an author.

In Jack London's story collection, *The House of Pride*, issues of colonization, miscegenation, and leprosy reach their pinnacle on the Hawaiian Islands. For London, the trip to the South Seas was an opportunity to explore the islands he had

read about in *Typee*, while also testing his own mettle as skipper of the *Snark*. His collection, however, goes far deeper than adventure narrative. His non-leprosy stories, “The House of Pride,” “Aloha Oe,” and “Chun Ah Chun” strongly resist any possibility of racial mixing on the islands, and, as a result, absentee colonial control is offered as the only suitable means of Hawaiian government. Those who are the products of miscegenation, such as Joe Garland, are sent away from the islands. Also deported from the desirable islands are the native victims of foreign-born leprosy. Those who are Polynesian, such as Lucy Mokunui, are uncritically shipped to the colony at Molokai, even though colonial incursions are the direct cause of their deportation. In the case of American Lyte Gregory, who, in contracting leprosy, literally becomes the Other, banishment to the margins of the text is the only authorial solution to the problem of racial coexistence. In “The Sheriff of Kona,” we also find the deepest exposure of the effect of the Hawaii travel experience on London himself. Since, like Gregory, he had argued of lepers that “they are happy there,” confronting the haunting reality of leprosy and Molokai was important. In retrospect, Jack London may have learned more from his South Sea journey than any of the authors in this study, for as he saw the decimating power of leprosy, he also witnessed the contradictions in American colonialism that his own writing exposed. As testament to his interest in critically exploring the dynamics of Hawaiian society and Western colonialism, London had been working on a novel about race relations on the islands when he was found dead in 1916. Moreover, it is clear that understanding the rendering of cultural interaction in his published Hawaiian work, *The House of Pride*, can provide a means of looking back critically at London’s well-studied novels *The Call of the Wild*, *The Iron Heel*, and *Martin Eden*.

Martin Green has written that “imperialism has penetrated the fabric of our culture, and infected our imagination, more deeply than we realize.”<sup>13</sup> In infiltrating our collective American psyche, imperialism has allowed the nation to articulate some of its greatest concerns — miscegenation, cannibalism, leprosy, to name a few — on foreign soil, away from the attendant cultural difficulties that would arise in works set at home, such as Twain’s *Huck Finn* or London’s *The Valley of the Moon*. Setting a piece of literature, whether fiction or nonfiction, on a distant, isolated island allows a writer to explore aspects of his or her identity that could not be addressed on American ground. Metaphorically, a writer is an island working assiduously in isolation from the world. But in writing the imagination, as in reaching a literal island, a writer brings baggage; this baggage is the culture that has both shaped the writer and which will receive the writer’s published product. In a sense, each of the five writers I have studied grew personally and professionally from his writing about island visits. We would not have the presence of the Herman Melville who explored the world metaphysically in *Moby-Dick* without



the Melville who wrote *Typee*, nor would we have the mature Jack London who fused naturalism and Jungian theory in *On the Makaloa Mat* without the Jack London who first wrote about the Hawaii in *The House of Pride*. Through the writing of travel, and the articulation of the unknown, the writer comes to know, and the artistic product is enlivened.

America, it seems, has taken something more from these pieces of travel writing. Since race is a central component of America's cultural development, it is only natural that our writers would confront race in their travels. But there are deeper motivations behind American imperial travel and documentation. Buell argues that during the nineteenth century, "America remained for many foreign commentators (especially the British)... the unvoiced 'other' — with the predictable connotations of exoticism, barbarism, and unstructuredness."<sup>14</sup> Naturally, then, America sought both to establish a reputation as literate and to show through colonialism that islanders, not Americans, were the true Others. As a result, exploration of the Other in America's travel literature was a cultural and authorial imperative. Through colonialism, both literal and literate, America would come of age for the world, and our authors expressed this colonial desire in their travel writing. Spurr has claimed that colonial discourse "may more accurately be described as the name for a series of colonizing discourses, each adapted to a specific historical situation,"<sup>15</sup> and each of the five texts I have studied is tailored to a precise American historical period and cultural need. *Typee* opened the American imagination to exotic islands; *To Cuba and Back* explored foreign slavery just prior to the Civil War; *Letters from Hawaii* suggested Hawaii as a place for American economic expansion; *South-Sea Idyls*, along with *The House of Pride*, considered the deleterious effects of American imperialism while continuing to promote commercial interest in Hawaii. In addition, these texts allowed America's authors to establish themselves by creation of a literary Other via travel — freeing them to write from a position of literary and cultural power. As a result, America could cast off its status as Other and pass this denigrating Object status to foreign societies. Taken collectively, these texts represent a chronological overview of the power literature has to reflect, refract, and influence American culture.

Though vibrant, colorful, and entertaining, the texts I have studied stand partly as picturesque reminders of America's past connection to the sea. Bender writes of Jack London's 1912 sailing voyage from Baltimore to Seattle around Cape Horn: "He was our last major writer to make the passage and tell the story before steam power and the Panama Canal left buried at sea one of our literature's earliest and most compelling tales of mythic proportions."<sup>16</sup> No longer the dangerous ocean adventure completed successfully only by the will of providence, sea travel to distant islands today is not the same voyage undertaken by these writers. Hawaii, in particular, stands as testament to this transformation. Nordhoff wrote tell-

ingly of Hawaii in 1874: “in the Islands a state, a society, has been created within a quarter of a century, and it has been very ably done. I am glad that it has been done mainly by Americans.”<sup>17</sup> Proudly echoing the feelings of many of his countrymen, Nordhoff’s words reflect what was only beginning in the nineteenth century, for by the mid-twentieth century, “Tourism, an industry built on the unprecedented post-WWII expansion of global capitalism and a number of striking technological advances... emerged as Hawaii’s economic base.”<sup>18</sup> It is reductive and simplistic to say that America’s rise to colonial power in the twentieth century is the result of the travel writing of its authors. But as a collective reflection of the society’s goals, desires, and worries, the authors in this study have articulated central cultural viewpoints and enabled American global capitalism to continue. As we move into the twenty-first century and the developing “global village,” Said’s assertion rings true: “Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinary, differentiated, and unmonolithic.”<sup>19</sup> We cannot return Hawaii to its original state or bring back the defunct Polynesian culture of the Marquesas, but by understanding how the spread of American influence is linked to the work of America’s authors, we may better see the origins, results, and future of the American colonial project.

## NOTES

1. Dana, *Two Years*, 10-11.
2. Stein, 190.
3. Bender, “Fiction,” 211.
4. Nina Baym, “From Metaphysics to Metaphor: The Image of Water in Emerson and Thoreau,” *Studies in Romanticism* 6 (1966): 234. As her title suggests Baym’s focus is on Emerson and Thoreau, but her discussion of water as literary metaphor has ramifications for all authors.
5. Rennie, 73.
6. Annette Kolodny, “Letting Go of Our Grand Obsessions: Notes Towards a New Literary History of the American Frontiers,” *American Literature* 69:1 (March 1992): 3.
7. Dana, *Two Years*, 109.
8. Amy Kaplan, “Left Alone,” 16.
9. Florence, 7.
10. Florence, 54-55.
11. Hietala, 262.
12. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 123.
13. Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).
14. Buell, “History,” 417.
15. Spurr, 1.
16. Bender, *Sea Brothers*, 84.

17. Nordhoff, 75.
18. Kent, 6.
19. Said, *Culture*, xxv.



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- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sly Civility." Chap. in Bhabha, *Location*, 93-101.

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