

**The Place of American Empire: Amerasian Territories  
and Late American Modernity**

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In American political philosophy, very little discussion is available on American imperialism. This is particularly true of mainstream publications and forums, which rarely address any form of imperialism, let alone its American incarnation.<sup>1</sup> The most proximate topics that receive mainstream attention might include just war, secession rights, the authority of the nation-state, and the international rule of law. Since these topics do intersect with the theme at hand, the failure of scholarly engagement may ultimately amount to circling around an unnamed problem.<sup>2</sup> The problem does have a name, however. And it has been hollered by hundreds of thousands of voices in American activist movements, most memorably in the days of the Vietnam War and recently against the war on Iraq. If for no other reason, then, American political philosophy ought to study U.S. imperialism to maintain relevance to pressing issues of national significance.<sup>3</sup>

When discussed in any philosophical depth, typically in staunchly or radically left venues, the focus is usually directed upon European expansion or on imperialism in the abstract. Some familiar subthemes are the 1492 inception of European expansion, monopoly capitalism as a precondition of modern imperialism, the European dissection of Africa following the 1885 Berlin Conference, the rise of a “Black Atlantic,” European imperial rivalry as a cause of WWI, Europe’s Orientalism, and the role of imperialism in the formation of global white supremacy. Consequently, in both mainstream and radical philosophical circles, sustained analysis of distinctly American imperialism still lies in the future.

My task here is to explore only one aspect of this anticipated project. I aim to show how a spatial perspective on U.S. expansionism affords us distinctive illumination on the nature of American empire and American white supremacy. America’s geographic location and the specific directions of its geopolitical expansion plotted the U.S. on to an importantly different imperialist and white supremacist trajectory relative to European variants of the same. Specifically, the U.S. has become what we might call an “Amerasian” superpower in virtue of its hemispheric control of the Americas – north, central, and south – and its occupation or control of various Asian and Pacific territories.

In the first section of this essay, I offer some theoretical backdrop on the nature of imperialism, white supremacy, and the triangular relationship between race, place, and the state. The topics of imperialism and white supremacy may be too “radical” for mainstream philosophy, but the theoretical framework I develop is not. With ready connections to left-liberalism, the framework retains polemical advantages it would not otherwise have. However, I do hint at some ways to think about how my framework can be mapped via reduction on to the vocabulary of radical political theory. In the second section, I motivate the relevant issues by considering the public debate over whether the recent U.S. incursion into Iraq is a case of Vietnam all over again. Although certain uses

of the Vietnam trope may have overriding activist value, its epistemic merits have some limitations if not appropriately reconstructed. In the third and final section, I discuss some illustrative events and aspects of U.S. imperialism in Latin America, the Pacific, and Asia to explain the distinctive geographical dimension, the Amerasian character, of American empire and late modernity. Primary emphasis is placed on less spectacular expressions of empire, specifically structures of foreign policy diplomacy that reveal how a racial state can expand the geographic scope of white supremacy.

I maintain that no understanding of America in late modernity can avoid reference to its spatial absorption of the Pacific and much of the Asian rim. In other words, the geography of U.S. empire makes late American modernity, among other things, an Orientalist modernity. And U.S. hemispheric control of the Americas makes Latin American subordination similarly integral to late American modernity. That America might be *constitutively* racialized with respect to Latin America, the Pacific, and Asia may seem odd given how much our race dialogue concerns black-white relations. But, put simply, there are racial others, foreign and domestic. I think there is no question that on the foreign policy front, Latin America, the Pacific, and Asia loom large in U.S. white supremacy. On the domestic front, of course, the so-called Negro Problem has occupied much of the discussion, even as other nonwhite “problems,” including the “Oriental Problem,” have been raised alongside and have intersected in complex ways with the “Negro Problem.”<sup>4</sup> With both of these contexts before us, the foreign and the domestic, we can see that while America’s slaves were black or Africa-derived, its imperial subjects were and continue to reside mainly in Latin America, the Pacific, and Asia.<sup>5</sup> This imperialistic enlargement of America has had a profound impact on the nature of U.S. white supremacy.

### **Theoretical Preliminaries**

If this essay concerned the moral structure of racist agency, the long and deep tradition of debate between deontology, consequentialism, and virtue theory could be assumed as backdrop. Given the scant discussion of imperialism in mainstream philosophical venues, some conceptually orienting remarks are in order. A serious defense of the framework to be discussed will have to wait for another occasion.

I understand imperialism to be a dominance relation between nations, the point of which is exploitation. But the complexities of international relations also reveal that some nation-to-nation relations are not obviously exploitative even though they seem to involve imperialism. For example, many of the nations at the security perimeter of America’s Cold War containment of China and the Soviet Union seem clearly to have been imperialistically subordinated but not obviously exploited by the U.S. Consequently, I refer by “imperialism” to a political system of exploitative dominance of nation X over nation Y, or the mere dominance of nation X over nation Z in order to sustain the exploitative dominance of nation Y.<sup>6</sup> This subordination relation may be de jure or de facto, formal or informal, direct or indirect. And the concept of dominance used here is probably best left as some notion of an asymmetric power relation. This way, many different accounts of power can be plugged into this most general characterization.

Perhaps one helpful way of understanding the asymmetric nature of the power relation is to consider some philosophical work on individual autonomy. We might say,

for example, that just as individual moral agents are autonomous insofar as they reflectively endorse 2<sup>nd</sup> order desires that dictate the terms and selection of the 1<sup>st</sup> order desires upon which they act, so too nation-states are autonomous insofar as they reflectively endorse (in the equivalent state sense) 2<sup>nd</sup> order interests that manage legislatively and juridically the 1<sup>st</sup> order interests upon which they act.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, this is but one way to proceed in cashing out the asymmetry relation. Insofar as it is useful, we might follow up by supposing that a nation can variously impinge upon another by undermining the aggrieved nation's 1<sup>st</sup> order interests (e.g. exercising fishing rights in an oceanic zone), 2<sup>nd</sup> order interests (e.g. the sovereignty-specifying or policy-making ability with which to make treaties about fishing or other territorial rights), or ability to sustain its sovereignty (e.g. indigenous political process). But since the sort of power relation relevant to imperialism is more than just conflict or jockeying between nations, the asymmetry in question must involve a special kind of impingement. Specifically, it must involve, as the concept of dominance is meant to capture, *control* as opposed to merely episodic infringements and, hence, must be characterized in terms of ability. In addition, the nation abilities in question cannot have as their object simply the frustration or manipulation of the 1<sup>st</sup> order interests of the other nation since those interests issue from rather than constitute a nation's sovereignty. Consequently, we might say that a nation X *dominates* another nation Y when X undermines or manipulates nation Y's 2<sup>nd</sup> order interests, which are sovereignty-specifying, policy-making interests, or Y's sovereignty-sustaining structures.

This way of putting it may help us to see that imperialistic dominance is infiltrative and embedded, even if informal, rather than merely abrasive or impinging. It also comports with the fact that one of the most common responses by dominated nations to oppressor nations is to make claims on the right to self-determination and to wage wars of national liberation. Finally, this model may also help us to see why dominated nations sometimes do *not* make such claims and do *not* wage such wars. Specifically, the imperialist nation may temporarily stave off conflict by supporting, among other things, aspects of the dominated nation's economy to prevent mass civil unrest or to "pay off" the ruling elite of the dominated nation. So the dominated nation's 1<sup>st</sup> order interests may actually converge with imperialist interests even when its 2<sup>nd</sup> order interests do not. Of course, when they diverge, a spotlight is put onto the preexisting divergence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> order interests from those of the imperialist nation. Two of the classic ways in which an imperialist nation exercises its dominance, its ability to manipulate the higher order interests of the subordinated nation, is to set up a colonial administration, often surrounded by a settler colony, or to install an indigenous dictator surrounded by foreign imperial liaisons.

Consider too that on the definition given, dominance has to be exploitative for the political system to count as imperialist. Otherwise, the political relation is no more than a kind of pathological bullying. Imperialism, rather, is a calculated scheme of extortion. It is a systemic injustice.<sup>8</sup> I think that the conduct of "fabulous" empires of old cannot be our paradigm for a host of obvious reasons, but one historical connotation is relevant here: Empire is something *built up*, even fantastically, by the resources extracted from normally unwilling givers. This is an important point because why after all would one nation systematically frustrate the interests or interest-making abilities of another simply for its own sake? Here the analogy between agent and state breaks down. Some agent

may sadistically torment another simply for the pleasure of the experience. State dominance, however, has a point, an interest of the dominating nation is served. Specifically, a dominating nation X can either exploit nation Y, or it can variously control nation Z in order to exploit nation Y.

This distinction between the X-Y and the X-Z relations is important because the merely dominated nation Z may not have the resources that would make its exploitation worthwhile when the more easily exploitable resources of Y are to be had. Alternatively, the merely dominated nation Z may be sufficiently powerful such that while it cannot prevent mere domination, it may revolt if it is additionally exploited, which would, again, make the imperialist project less promising for dominating nation X. In reality, given the market-seeking not simply materials-extracting nature of advanced capitalist economies, even nation Z will be exploited in some way or other. My point is simply that it need not be, so long as some other nation is. This helps us to explain why one can argue that America was imperialist in its Cold War containment policy. Pursuit of this policy involved the domination of nations in the security perimeter placed around China and the Soviet Union, and the expansive extirpation of communism in the American hemisphere. These Amerasian pawns in the Cold War, often exploitatively dominated, were at least merely dominated as the U.S. tried to contain communist threats to its preexisting exploitation relations.

If this account of imperialism is insipidly plausible, then this is much to the good. It would be self-defeating for my purposes here to advance a controversial definition when it is not my aim to offer anything like a thorough account or a serious defense of its legitimacy. At any rate, this conception can be linked to some classic claims about the concrete operations of imperialism. Specifically, the imperialist nation uses its range of infiltrating powers to reconfigure to its own advantage the geography, politics, law, culture, or economy of the dominated nation. As is commonly pointed out, the most typical operations of imperialism are the expropriation of land, raw materials, and even people from the subordinated country, as well as the reconstruction of the nation's markets, labor force, and general productive relations to increase systematically the empire's capital accumulation. In other words, as Lenin and other theorists of imperialism have contended, the exploitative dominance is typically deformative and parasitic.<sup>9</sup> This often takes a viral form as when the host economy is turned capitalist in order that its market dynamics can be manipulated to the profit of the imperialist nation. So the given definition is meant to have a breadth that accommodates reference to the classic aspects of nation autonomy, namely political sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also other significant features of the national community threatened by imperialist dominion.<sup>10</sup>

Undoubtedly, this brief characterization of imperialism can be revised or amended in various ways. But it has the virtue of being commonsensical to left-liberalism and of being compatible with some more radical and fine-tuned accounts of the same.<sup>11</sup>

Regarding the latter point, consider that many Marxist accounts of imperialism, which defend the ultimacy of historical-economic explanations, are consistent with the account given here. As a reference point, we might think of how philosophers of mind have sought to formulate and defend neurobiological reductionist glosses on psychological explanations. Whether or not in the final analysis our psychological discourse can be reduced so, the great majority of philosophers of mind reject eliminativism and concede

that nothing about our psychological discourse necessarily precludes reductionism. Analogously, the political conception of imperialism offered here can at least in principle be reduced to, say, a Leninist account of the advanced stage of capitalism (i.e. the international rivalry of finance capital and industrial monopolies, and the consequent quest for new investment markets). What I described as a political relation, then, will be recast as an epiphenomenon of or somehow ultimately derivative upon an economic relation of some kind. Such reduction, moreover, need not be eliminativist with respect to political, legal, and cultural aspects of imperialism. As long as these latter aspects can be roughly mapped onto deeper economic processes, little is lost. Indeed, much is gained in focusing on these latter aspects because no Marxist account of imperialism claims that the economic foundation of imperialism is transparent.<sup>12</sup> So allegedly superstructural features, like political dominance, can be referenced at the very least as an initial way of bringing disparate events and conditions under a unifying conceptual rubric.

One emergent discourse has argued for the diminishing power of states and the increasingly overriding power of supranational forces, like corporations. On such an account, the unifying rubric of superstructural elements in my definition will have as its reduction base this discourse about corporate power. One recently published neo-Marxist book, *Empire*, by Hardt and Negri, offers a highly developed and radically reconfiguring version of this general line of thought.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, this is not the place for a full discussion of their book. But some mention seems needed since unlike previous Marxist-inspired accounts, theirs is eliminativist and would not be compatible with the definition above. This is because neither the posits of nation-states and relations between them, nor the general conceptual schema underlying such posits are central to their account of empire in its current and future forms, whereas they are crucial on the account I have offered.<sup>14</sup> So let me register a concern about their thesis with the aim simply of further clarifying the framework I use throughout this essay.

My primary concern is that their decentralization and diffusionist thesis – that empire is now in some sense everywhere – has the effect of dissolving the phenomenon in question. An analogy would be helpful here. Occasionally, one hears the proclamation that everything is interpretation – even the retinal production of color perception. This claim may be true, but the implication often is that ocular perception is essentially no different than the interpretive visual perception of, say, a Picasso painting. Similarly, I sometimes also hear people say that every story is a fiction since no rendering of an event will capture all details and all such rendering will bear the mark of a perspective, of which there are many. According to this notion, the New York Times and the National Enquirer are in important respects on a par with each other.

Now, my concern with these two ideas – “everything is interpretation” and “every story is a fiction” – is that the claim to universality has led to the dissolution of the phenomenon that initially inspired the theoretical claim. Put bluntly, blue perception is not cubist interpretation. The former is hard-wired and autonomic, even if it can be educated to discriminate between subtle shades of the color. The latter is available only to those of a certain historical period and culture, and even then, only to those with the right sort of training. Moreover, the process and phenomenology of cubist interpretation in any one person is more involved, deliberative, and temporally protracted. Again, blue perception is not cubist interpretation. This insistence is not unlike the case of someone saying to the infamous, old-school, perhaps fictional, behaviorist, “Yes! I really *feel* the

pain; it's not just pain behavior!" The insistence is meant to shake the person out of the grips of theory. So those who endorse the "everything is interpretation" idea end up, as I said, dissolving the phenomenon by inserting it into a universal thesis whose paradigm is sophisticated interpretive perception. If, for all intents and purposes, blue perception has the relevant properties of cubist interpretation, then blue perception is, quite simply, no longer blue perception. The expression "blue perception" has undergone a semantic shift. And the same will hold for the thesis that every story is a fiction.

Now, if the phenomenon in question were to be preserved in theory formulation, then two species of interpretation would be distinguished to accommodate the distinctive features of blue perception, on the one hand, and cubist interpretation, on the other. Differentiated thus, the claim that everything is interpretation would be true, but much of its provocative force will have dissipated since cubist perception no longer lurks in the backdrop as a shaping paradigm for the universal thesis. The upshot of all this is that the claim, "empire is everywhere," even if we grant this is true, must appropriately differentiate between the species of cases on the basis of which the omnipresence thesis is asserted. Such differentiation prior to and during subsumption is crucial, for U.S. imperial nationhood really is different from, say, Uruguayan or Finnish nationhood. Without the preservation of this difference, the phenomenon of empire dissolves in the theoretical wash. In various places of Hardt and Negri's book, the threat of such dissolution is not given sufficient weight.<sup>15</sup> This can be put another way. Given the pantheism of their view of empire, we might consider that people who believe that divinity is everywhere nevertheless find themselves worshipping or otherwise singling out some manifestations of divinity more than others, where this is not faulted. Similarly, we might suppose that even if Hardt and Negri are right that empire, or Empire, is everywhere, some manifestations of it, like U.S. empire, are rightly deemed more powerful, more heinous, and so on, than others. If Hardt and Negri endorsed this, and I do not think they could, then perhaps their account would, after all, be able to form a reduction base for the account I have given, like the many other Marxist accounts I think are capable of this.<sup>16</sup>

Obviously, more can be said about this. I hope only to have clarified, contrastively, my theoretical framework. Moreover, I offer these general remarks about theoretically stratified differentiation in anticipation of building a case for the distinctive character of U.S. imperialism, which we might even consider to be a real, as opposed to the often imagined, "American Exceptionalism."

By "White Supremacy," I mean a political system of exploitative dominance of a class of persons designated "white" over a class of persons designated "nonwhite." This materially and normatively hierarchical structure has its origins in the modern period, and it admits of global, regional, national, and sub-national variants. And the nature of the hierarchy consists of phenotypically marked groups being differentially burdened and benefited, constrained and liberated, derogated and respected, in accord with the principle of white superordination. As with imperialist dominance, the asymmetric power relation of white supremacy may be de jure or de facto, formal or informal, direct or indirect. Unlike imperialism, however, white supremacy involves transnational groups without the formal internal structure of nation states. Of course, within a white supremacist nation, the group hierarchy may be formalized and powerfully configured by state actions, not to mention culturally deepened by the distorted psyches of generations of racist superordinate citizens.

Arguably, the most articulate account of this disfiguring political system is Charles Mills's thesis, the Racial Contract. On this thesis, the sorts of moral, political, and legal statuses conferred by the social contract, as variously understood by classic liberal European political theory, is actually underwritten by a racial contract, which restricts the in-principle benefits of the social contract to whites at the expense of nonwhites. "Although no single act," according to Mills, "literally corresponds to the drawing up and signing of a contract, there is a series of acts – papal bulls and other theological pronouncements; European discussions about colonialism, "discovery," and international law; pacts, treaties, and legal decisions; academic and popular debates about the humanity of nonwhites; the establishment of formalized legal structures of differential treatment; and the routinization of informal illegal or quasi-legal practices effectively sanctioned by the complicity of silence and government failure to intervene and punish perpetrators – which collectively can be seen, not just metaphorically but close to literally, as its conceptual, juridical, and normative equivalent."<sup>17</sup>

One of the important implications of Mills' account is that racism is not an aberration of the political order so much as haunting conformity to its underlying principles. And he is clear that the causes that maintain white supremacy need not be the same as those that initiated it and need not always be intentionally racial. For example, nonracially motivated processes, like purely genealogical transmissions of wealth and social capital, can in virtue of their effects help to maintain the political gulf between whites and nonwhites. Of course, a similar rationale has been advanced in defense of affirmative action: Even if a black and a white student are equally capable, the white student will have a starting line far ahead of the black student and, hence, will "win the race" unless a counterbalancing measure, like affirmative action, is introduced. So Mills contends plausibly that the longevity of white supremacy can be explained by both explicitly racial and non-racial processes so long as they happen to be causally efficacious in preserving white superordination.<sup>18</sup> One way to put this, and it may or may not be favored by Mills, is as follows: In a range of hierarchical group relationships – small or large, local or regional, racial or otherwise – so long as enough of the variously subordinated groups sufficiently overlap with or are sufficiently coextensive with the class of persons designated "black," white supremacy receives lateral (as opposed to directly racial) consolidation. Finally, another strength of Mills' account is that it focuses on a "series of acts" and does not postulate that white supremacy was inaugurated or maintained through a single totalizing contract. This is important because the historical record seems not to reveal any such comprehensive contract at the inception of the system. And quite apart from beginnings, the staying power of the system seems to be a feature of white supremacy better characterized by something deeper and more binding than a single formal act of governance. Pervasive and enduring norm-compliance with the principle of white superordination, without the formal governance of an all-encompassing pact, reveals the remarkable tensile strength of the systemic bonds we know to inhere in white supremacy.

The Racial Contract thesis is not the only account of the phenomenon of white supremacy described above. After all, contractarianism is not the only way to determine the basic structure of society and to light up its general normative features. The Racial Contract does, however, offer a highly cogent and persuasive explanation, and it can be retained here as one exemplary account of the global color line.

On these admittedly but intentionally thin and abstract characterizations of imperialism and white supremacy, a few of the more salient connections between them might be highlighted. Consider first that there are at least two possible world histories along which the global color line might have formed. On one trajectory, white Europe-America disallows any racial others from entering its constituent nations, be it by immigration or forced transport. Whenever this rule is violated, those racial others who attain entry are subsequently subjugated within white Europe-America. On the other trajectory, white Europe-America avoids such isolationism and expands its sovereignty beyond its borders to encompass the whole planet, making racial others its subjects by default. The latter, of course, involves the phenomenon of imperialism. And, as it turns out, it is the actual history of the world. Yet, at the same time, some aspects of the first trajectory are also actual. For, in fact, some nations of white Europe-America have set up racialized immigration blockades, and racial others who have entered have subsequently been subordinated. Much philosophy of race has tended to imagine the first trajectory as regards American subordination of blacks and the second trajectory as regards European colonization of Africa. My project here is to complement these accounts with a fuller consideration of the second trajectory and, hence, American expansionism in Latin America, the Pacific, and Asia. These two trajectories and the actual history of white planetary imperialism draw attention to the distinctive triangle of relations between race, place, and the state because the imperialist negotiation and absorption of racialized spaces is authorized, generated, and maintained by racialized nation-states.

Ronald Sundstrom has argued persuasively for the interactive and mutually constitutive production of racial persons and racial places.<sup>19</sup> Since we are not disembodied persons, we are located in social space. But, equally, that space comes to inhabit us because place can impact the material conditions of living and because as representing creatures we incorporate our understanding of our place into our self- and interpersonal conceptions. Given such convergence between social identity and social space, we ought, on Sundstrom's account, to augment our analysis of race by coordinating our use of the analytic categories of persons and places. So racialized spaces, like ghettos and "discovered" lands, have non-accidental links to racial identities, like black and indigenous, and to racial identifications, often derogatory, like lazy and criminal, and savage and barbarian. And these give rise to directives with racial undertones, like "Avoid the ghetto" and "Settle the land." In turn, these directives consolidate the place-person inter-constituting process because "Avoid the ghetto" leads to devastating denials of needed funding and "Settle the land" leads to the dispossession, sometimes genocidal, of the actual inhabitants of the area. In the following sections, then, I consider this mutually constitutive process in America's Amerasian expansion. As we will see, the person-place dynamics of "Avoid the ghetto" and "Settle the Land" are distinctly domestically oriented or internally focused. In contrast, the examples to be discussed reveal the foreign policy face of the racialized co-constitution of peoples and places.

The focus on imperialistically generated movement across racial places also underscores what David Theo Goldberg has depicted as the race of the state.<sup>20</sup> White expansionism generally and American imperialism in particular has certainly involved individual actors moving of their own accord to exotic lands and bringing with them the full register of warped racial conceptions. But the wide and long view reveals that the



most substantial structures of racialized migration and the racialized reconstruction of far-off places are sanctioned, initiated, and maintained by states. As I remarked earlier, imperialism is a political relation between nations, one of exploitative dominance and sometimes deformative parasitism. Central to such a relation, then, will be infiltrative state actions by the dominating nation and the unequal dialectic formed by the constricted state responses of the dominated nation. Goldberg's illuminating discussion mostly concerns state control that is focused internally in the imperial nation or focused internally in its colonial satellites. Such control includes apparatuses that define, regulate, govern, and economically manage domestic racial others.<sup>21</sup> This account is amenable, however, to an exploration of the foreign policy face of the racial state, which pertains more directly to the theme of this essay.

Consider that the sort of unjust political dominance central to imperialism can be achieved in a variety of ways. They include extraterritorial political authority (e.g. the "Insular" sovereignty of the U.S. over Puerto Rico since 1898, or the direct rulership of Okinawa by the U.S. Dept. of the Navy roughly from 1945 to 1972), coercive diplomacy (e.g. Commodore Perry's infamous opening of the Japan market, and arguably the creation of Plan Colombia and the Andean Counternarcotics Initiative), manipulative diplomacy (e.g. the secret Taft-Katsura Agreement of 1905 whereby the U.S. agreed to allow Japan to manage Korea and Japan agreed to leave alone the U.S.-ruled Philippines), surrogate sovereignty or de facto control through dictator installation (e.g. U.S. support of repressive puppet governments, like the Marcos regime in the Philippines and the Rhee regime in South Korea), or by economic manipulation through control of market and investment structures (e.g. U.S. banking control of Chinese railways after the issuance of John Hay's Open Door Policy, or the economic dominance of Panama through commercial control of the lucrative canal and the "free reign" given to the U.S.-based United Fruit Company).

In most of these cases, and usually a number of these tactics are employed simultaneously, an unequal diplomatic dialectic is established. But where these have failed to favor the aims of the dominating nation, other means have been pursued. The U.S., for example, has employed all of the following measures to ensure compliance or to effect regime change: assassination (e.g. Castro's explosive cigar), support of coup d'états or secession (e.g. the ousting of Argentina's Allende), funding and training of repressive forces (e.g. the School of the Americas, now interestingly retitled the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation, in Fort Benning, Georgia), embargos (e.g. Cuba and North Korea), unequal comprehensive economic matrices (e.g. NAFTA), small-scale incursions (e.g. the 1915 Occupation of Haiti, the 1983 Urgent Fury mission in Grenada, and the 1989 Just Cause mission in Panama), and massively-scaled war (e.g. Korea and Vietnam).

Notice that not all of these means of dominance are tantamount to imperialism. Again, imperialism is not mere conflict or jockeying between nations. So we need to look at the *overall pattern* to see how these means are gathered together to generate the sort of political system that is imperialism. Consideration of these various means, especially ones involving some form or other of diplomacy, indicates that neither war nor peace per se demonstrates the presence of imperialism since both war and peace are compatible with and, depending on context, help to consolidate the deformative or parasitic relation characteristic of imperialism. Bearing these relations and the earlier definitions in mind, I

now turn to a more focused discussion of how America became an Amerasian superpower.

### **The Vietnam Trope**

Put the phrase “Iraq and Vietnam” through an internet search engine and scores of matches will appear. This won’t surprise anyone who keeps up with the news. For many months, articles and editorials have linked the two wars by considering whether the invasion of Iraq is imperialist, by addressing the level of domestic and worldwide protest against the war, and by highlighting the unanticipated escalation in U.S. casualties. But in joining the two wars, commentators and journalists are not discussing an esoteric relation. We all know that since 1975, Vietnam shadows any U.S. military incursion that is shrouded in controversy and crosses some vaguely defined casualty threshold. It can well be said that the ghost of Vietnam rests deep in our collective imagination.

And imagination is the appropriate faculty of mind to highlight, not simply for those of us who assess from afar but also, and perhaps especially, those in the midst of the military action in Iraq. An embedded journalist, for example, described his experience of Hueys roaring overhead, husks of buildings, and the threat of snipers, as a surreal reenactment of Stanley Kubrick’s “Full Metal Jacket.” As his unit found cover after zigzagging across an urban expanse, his consciousness was overtaken by the haunting images of the young VC woman methodically picking off nearly a whole unit from the hidden recesses of a bombed-out building. The cinema-shocked journalist finally came to when a soldier next to him happened to ask, of all things, “You seen that film Full Metal Jacket?”<sup>22</sup> Fans of the movie might be interested to know that R. Lee Ermey, who played the infamous drill sergeant, actually visited auxiliary troops at Camp Coyote in Kuwait. With the alleged aim of raising troop morale, Ermey thundered his now classic, ball-busting, sissy-vilifying, boot camp speech.<sup>23</sup> Apparently, however, Kubrick is not the only guide for these Generation Y recruits. A columnist reported that in at least one instance a division of U.S. troops launched a search for Saddam loyalists by blasting on loudspeakers Richard Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkries,” the unforgettable musical theme of Francis Ford Coppola’s “Apocalypse Now.”<sup>24</sup>

Needless to say, U.S. citizens have variously bridged some 30 years in pairing Iraq and Vietnam.<sup>25</sup> And few are immune to its unsettling effects, even those ultimately not persuaded of such a connection. One is tempted to say that this general phenomenon is a prime example of an imperial nation contending with the “Return of the Repressed.” I think there is something to this postcolonial application of Freud. But too much focus on it can obscure two significant considerations. First, the referencing of Vietnam in the Iraq discourse is epistemic or hermeneutic. The idea of the “Return of the Repressed” concerns the reassertion of typically submerged and indirectly influential feelings and conceptual content. In the case at hand, however, the Vietnam idea is not, or not simply, a suddenly buoyant nexus of psychic energies radically altering the psychological landscape that it could previously affect only through shadowy manipulation. The Vietnam idea serves more fundamentally as a conceptual filter by which to make *sense* of and to develop moral *articulacy* and *depth of feeling* about the nation’s conduct and commitments in the wake of the now “world-historical” trauma of 9/11. Of course, many commentators have professed to be agnostic about or outright rejected the notion that Iraq

is another Vietnam. But in doing so, these commentators are still using the Vietnam idea hermeneutically since the conceptual framework is whether in fact Iraq is like Vietnam, whether it will become like Vietnam, and for that matter, whether any future U.S. military incursions will bear such comparison.

A second reason not to overemphasize the irruptive phenomenon of Return of the Repressed rides atop the first one just given. Namely, the Vietnam hermeneutic is radically incomplete and typically unknown to be so, with the result that no resurfacing of repressed ideas will rekindle a fuller or richer memory since the incomplete hermeneutic will offer no relevant pre-Vietnam content to remember. More specifically, the typical use of the Vietnam trope, while potentially effective in generating the widest possible opposition to U.S. imperialism, diminishes our ability to think through and raise opposition to pre-9/11, pre-Vietnam U.S. expansionism with an ongoing, in some cases *century-long*, reality. One of the most interesting essays addressing the necessity of a long memory and attempting to produce it was published during the thick of the Vietnam War itself. Stuart Creighton Miller argued in “Our Mylai of 1900: Americans in the Philippine Insurrection” that

Rarely do historical events resemble each other as closely as the involvements of the United States in the Philippines in 1899 and Vietnam in 1964. The murky origins of the fighting; the quick adoption of unsuccessful Spanish techniques for suppressing Filipinos; an unrealistically optimistic, handsome, martial-looking commander whose ineptness was rewarded with accolades from Washington; a peace movement with “teach-ins” at universities and a more activist radical faction; rumors and finally evidence of American atrocities; complaints of rainy seasons, hidden jungle entrenchments and clandestine enemy soldiers who blended with the peasants after ambushing and booby-trapping American soldiers; talk of getting allies to assume the burden of fighting; and, finally, a scandal involving one officer and seven top sergeants, who pocketed commissary funds.<sup>26</sup>

I think it is a foregone conclusion that most Americans know little if anything about the predatory incursion, massacres of innocents, and other details noted by Miller. In fact, it is likely that most Americans do not even know that there was a Philippine Insurrection, much less that it was in reality a brutal Philippine-American war. This absence has received some official sanction. On the military casualties website of the Department of Defense, there is a record of deaths of U.S. soldiers in the Spanish-American War, which lasted only a handful of months, but no mention of the existence of a Philippine-American War, which lasted several years.<sup>27</sup>

But why should we need a longer and fuller memory? The reason is not about adding flagella to the whip. It is rather that only the enlarged view will afford us better insight into the operations of American empire and the peculiar racial geography of late American modernity. And much of this understanding will have to focus on imperial processes that do not advertise themselves as such and, hence, easily get lost in the backdrop of the more spectacular manifestations of empire that the Vietnam trope typically illuminates. Therefore, much as anti-war advocates have wanted to ride hard the Iraq-Vietnam connection to sting the conscience of the rest of the nation, we need also to place this connection in a wider historical and geographic context.

### **Amerasian Geography and Late American Modernity**

One of the most popular myths in American history is that the nation maintained an isolationist policy until overseas acquisition of colonies in 1898.<sup>28</sup> But the historical record shows that the formation of the original Northeast colonies and the ensuing expansion – for example, in the 1787 Northwest Ordinance and the 1803 Louisiana Purchase – led to a series of Indian Wars and the eventual genocidal dispossession of the indigenous inhabitants of sovereign lands.<sup>29</sup> This is not isolationism, whatever else it may be. Of course, the notion of territorial contiguity might be a shaping background assumption such that “expansion” is just supposed to mean overseas expansion. Returning to the concepts described earlier, however, such intra-continental incursions are no less cases of imperialism. U.S. politicians, soldiers, and settlers manipulated, ignored, or simply rejected the various forms of indigenous sovereignty and corresponding claims to territorial integrity that they faced in their movement across the continent. We know too that the westward push and the great fanfare of Manifest Destiny eventually led to the U.S.-Mexico War from 1846-1848. The defeat of Mexico was sealed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty delivered to the U.S. the present-day Southwestern states, the legacy of which is borne in their Spanish names.<sup>30</sup>

In the several decades that followed, we know that the cataclysmic event of the Civil War transpired and that it created, with the freeing of slaves, a tremendous opportunity to make democracy work right, which the nation would forfeit. Much has been written on this and the following period of Reconstruction as these pertain to transitions in white supremacy. Far less discussed are the initially quiet but eventually deeply influential transformations in the foreign policy face of white supremacy. As we know, the promise of Reconstruction would be crushed, and as Rayford Logan famously called it, the “nadir” of black American history would be the stepping stone into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But, as well, in this last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, America would become a recognizable colonial power and would climb onto the global stage of white supremacy. And as the racial state produced *Dred Scott vs. Sandford* in 1857, the Black Codes of 1865, and *Plessy vs. Ferguson* in 1896, it also developed on the foreign policy front various kinds of power-consolidating legislation and jurisprudence. Four sets of them can be usefully highlighted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century: 1) the Monroe Doctrine (1823), augmented by the Roosevelt Corollary (1904); 2) the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882); 3) the annexation of Hawai’i, the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico (1898), followed by the Insular Cases (1901); and 4) the Open Door Policy (1899-1900), the Taft-Katsura Agreement (1905), and the Root-Takahira Agreement (1908). This list is by no means exhaustive. But consideration of it does help to illumine the racial and imperialist crucible out of which America would later build its Cold War policies and apparatuses. And all these factors, of course, would come to a head in the raging ferment of America’s period of Cold War civil rights.<sup>31</sup> But notice that most of the listed laws or cases are far less familiar than, say, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. They are, nevertheless, equally significant for understanding American white supremacy. This is because imperialism had by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century become the driving force for the global expansion of white supremacy, the dominative absorption of racialized places. And this was no less true for America than for Europe. So the relative obscurity of the laws and cases just listed is

further evidence of the lacunae I have been at pains to address. So a brief discussion of them is in order.

In the previous sections, I offered some theoretical backdrop and a call for a wider memory. In what follows, I sketch a rough and general portrait of the foreign policy face of U.S. white supremacy. We can discern in it the developing contours of the Amerasian geography of late American modernity. And in proceeding this way, I follow Michael Walzer's methodology of historically illustrating political philosophical claims. But, as will become clearer, my holistic portrait of the theme at hand constitutes in effect a critique of important parts of his differently focused and piecemeal account.

### *White Supremacy under The Monroe Umbrella*

Perhaps the earliest and most important guiding principle and *vehicle* of white hemispheric control was the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. In the early 1820's, American leaders became concerned about the growing strength of reconfigured monarchies in Europe emerging from the turn-of-the-century Napoleonic Wars. Their concern included fears that European nations, like Spain, would reassert a direct colonial presence in North or Latin America or obstruct commerce in the region. The U.S. in essence "claimed" the Americas. So President Monroe produced his 1823 Doctrine to preempt rival encroachment from European powers. The Doctrine asserts that the Western hemisphere would be closed to further colonization, that any interference in the hemisphere would be conceived as a security threat, and that the U.S. would neither intercede in European wars nor meddle with pre-existing European colonies in the Western hemisphere. Unsurprisingly, no indigenous or Latin American leaders were consulted. To Anglo-Saxon democracy, of course, the first peoples of land were not capable of self-government, and so they could only benefit from U.S. tutelage and the protection of the Monroe Doctrine.

As long as business was good, the Monroe Doctrine seemed to carry on of its own momentum. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, serious problems for the Doctrine emerged. Venezuela in 1902 and the Dominican Republic in 1904 were in danger of military encroachment by European powers, like Britain and Germany, due to their inability or unwillingness to make payments on significant debts. The U.S. intervened, and in 1904 President Theodore Roosevelt added to the Monroe Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary, which dictated that no European country could forcibly collect debts from Latin America and that in effect the U.S. would offer policing mediation over the hemisphere. Again, no indigenous or Latin American leaders were seriously consulted. Empowered by this edict, the U.S. would begin a pattern of more explicitly imperial incursions throughout Latin America – Haiti, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic again, and many more.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-1848 is the only large-scale military confrontation between the U.S. and Latin American countries. Scores of small-scale incursions by the U.S., and coercive diplomacy that rides atop the proven likelihood of such incursions, have been the mainstay of the more forcible modes of U.S. tutelage or policing. And the number of such infiltrations only increased as the U.S. sought to repulse communism where it had earlier deflected rival imperial aspirations. Consequently, the effect of the Monroe Doctrine and its augmentation by the Roosevelt Corollary might be put this way: the Monroe Doctrine prevented European encroachment upon Latin America and obviated any proximal confrontations between the still fledgling

U.S. and the more mature European powers, and the Roosevelt Corollary granted infiltrative powers to a more mature U.S. and ready-made justifications for the use of such powers in Latin American countries “in crisis” or in “danger” of being overrun by Communists.

Recently, many U.S. citizens have become informed about repressive U.S. policy in Latin America due to the press given to the Vieques bombing site and to the School of the Americas. Less well known, however, is just how long and variegated is the pre-history of such examples of U.S. political dominance in its hemisphere. I have briefly characterized some of the conduct of the racial state in this pre-history. And I think it is important to emphasize that this was a *racial* state developing and enforcing policy in a hemisphere it had unilaterally claimed for itself. I have already noted some of the general racial structures involved. But consider too that as historian Walter La Feber has pointed out, President Theodore Roosevelt really did believe that a U.S.-controlled Panama Canal would have a civilizing effect on the racial others surrounding it.<sup>33</sup> Of course, the project was a business and military venture, but his motives were mixed in this way. In addition, his successor, President William Taft, really did believe that left to their own devices Panamanians, especially black Panamanians, could bog down the smooth operations of the canal. And in this specific racialized respect, he made the analogy to Haitians allegedly running down their own country. Moreover, in building the canal, the U.S. implemented a labor structure in which white workers received the most pay, and Mestizo and black Panamanians were harshly subordinated. In essence, the U.S. exported to Panama the divided spatial and normative structure of Jim Crow.<sup>34</sup>

But, returning to the machinery set up in the first section of this essay, far more important than this or that presidential motive are the processes that sustain white supremacy at home and abroad. As noted earlier, specifically racialized intent is *not* necessary for a policy or law to contribute to the maintenance of white supremacy. So long as those subordinated by some acts of state are largely coextensive with those subordinated by other more explicitly racialized acts of state, white supremacy receives lateral support. The overall pattern of the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary reveals both direct and lateral maintenance of an hemispherically enlarged U.S. white supremacy.

### *Defining the Citizen Antithesis*

As the U.S. jockeyed with European powers to maintain its Monroe umbrella, it had to deal with a new and unusual threat on its horizon, a kind of poison to its polity, namely the immigration of the Chinaman or more generally the Oriental. In 1920, the widely respected white supremacist academician, Lothrop Stoddard, conveyed perhaps the most bombastic version of the common loathing.

The question of Asiatic immigration is incomparably the greatest external problem which faces the white world. Supreme phase of the colored peril, it already presses, and is destined to press harder in the near future. It infinitely transcends the peril of arms or markets, since it threatens not merely our supremacy or posterity but our very race-existence, the well-springs of being, the sacred heritage of our children.<sup>35</sup>

Much of the disdain, however, had as much to do with fear of white labor displacement as with revulsion at some alleged interior Oriental quality. Asian laborers were willing to

work under great duress for very little pay, making them more easily exploited labor commodities than white workers, who would strike for better wages. The formation of white working class identity in California, then, was of a piece with the movement to drive Asians out of the country.<sup>36</sup> Sometimes, however, the sense of economic threat was folded into anti-Asian loathing. Lothrop Stoddard, for example, entertained the charge that Asian labor prowess may actually show Asians to be a superior race, only to rebut the charge as follows: “Reilly can *outdo* Ah-San, but Ah-San can *underlive* Reilly.” (his emphasis)<sup>37</sup> On this rejoinder, not only is the Asian less capable of hard labor, his body, it seems to be insinuated, is of a lower phylogenetic order, like dogs, cats, rodents, and other hardy mammals.<sup>38</sup>

Now, all this may seem a little extreme, but Stoddard was no William Randolph Hearst or James Phelan. He was a patrician white supremacist, with all that that implies. In any case, the underlying idea of radical racial difference was in some form or other shared as much by the political elite as the common laborer. Perhaps the most striking example lies in the Great Dissenter, Justice Harlan. In his now classic opposition to the verdict of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Harlan offered a probing and eloquent rebuttal of the “separate but equal” doctrine upheld by the Court, castigating the racial caste that that doctrine would sanction.<sup>39</sup> In making his case, he points out what he deemed to be a great “absurdity,” namely that while blacks would be disallowed entry into white spaces, such spaces would accommodate entry of the Chinese, “a race so different from our own that we do not permit those belonging to it to become citizens of the United States.”<sup>40</sup> These ideas would be expressed again in the case of *Wong Kim Ark v. United States* (1898). The Court ruled in this case that U.S.-born Chinese could be naturalized even if the parents were not. Harlan would concur with Chief Justice Fuller’s dissent, which intoned against what he deemed to be the promiscuous granting of citizenship. More specifically, Harlan would endorse Fuller’s judgment that the alienness coupled with the inassimilability of the Chinese would make their inclusion into the citizenry dangerous for the social bonds that undergird the polity. Ultimately, Harlan had little reason to be afraid of the Chinese, for as he well knew and surely applauded, the Chinese had been singled out racially for exclusion from immigration to the U.S. in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. And Congress would pass in 1917 a wider immigration blockade against the “barred Asiatic zone” to ensure that except in two special cases, no Asian nations, from the present-day Middle East to the Pacific, would be permitted to send its sullyng subjects to the U.S.<sup>41</sup> The two exceptions were the racial cold war rival, Japan, and the U.S. colony, the Philippines, and I will have more to say about them shortly.

The upshot of these considerations is that by legally repulsing the Oriental immigrant from its borders, the U.S. state and American culture constructed Asians as a citizen antithesis, a legal pariah. As Lisa Lowe has contended,

In the last century and a half, the American *citizen* has been defined over against the Asian *immigrant*, legally, economically, and culturally. These definitions have cast Asian immigrants both as persons and populations to be integrated into the national political sphere and as the contradictory, confusing, unintelligible elements to be marginalized and returned to their alien origins. “Asia” has been always a complex site on which the manifold anxieties of the U.S. nation-state have been figured: such anxieties have figured Asian countries as exotic, barbaric, and alien, and Asian laborers immigrating to the United States from the nineteenth century onward as a “yellow peril” threatening to displace white European immigrants. Orientalist racializations of Asians as physically and intellectually different from “whites” predominated especially in periods

in which a domestic crisis of capital was coupled with nativist anti-Asian backlash, intersecting significantly with immigration exclusion acts and laws against naturalization of Asians in 1882, 1924, and 1934.<sup>42</sup>

One of the distinctive features of this cultural and legal exclusion of Orientals is something that is actually perhaps too obvious to notice. Namely, the mechanisms of exclusion were utterly successful. Arguably, these mechanisms locked neatly into place with Jim Crow structures with the effect that blacks were placed into caste subordination and Asians were kept nearly altogether absent from U.S. territory and, hence, the polity. So the reason why Orientals were only occasionally referenced by Jim Crow structures was that as a simple matter of fact the U.S. state had legally mostly purified the nation of them. Of course, some Asians did gain entry. But their numbers were tiny compared to the rest of the populace. Even today, nearly 40 years since the racialized immigration blockades were removed in 1965, Asian Pacific Americans still constitute only about 5% of the U.S. population. This will increase with the cumulative effects of the strong and sustained post-1965 immigration and the raising of families here. It is nevertheless a strikingly low percentage, now as then. This suggests, therefore, a profound asymmetry between, on the one hand, the presence of Asians in America and, on the other, the amount of propaganda and the sheer intensity of feeling against this largely absent peoples. That there should have been such strong domestic concern about a greatly distant people unveils the mutated psyche of U.S. white supremacy and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that codified it.

#### *“Illimitable Markets” and Insular Sovereignty*

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a double movement regarding Asia. As just described, Asian peoples were repelled from the borders of the nation. But Asian places exercised a powerful magnetism on businessmen and politicians. With the contiguous territories swallowed up by a westward-moving white supremacy, Latin America, including the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, and Asia became the new frontier of expansion. The timing of this geographical upheaval is distinctive. With the tremendous industrial and finance capital growth following the Civil War, and claims that the depression of the 1890s was due to an overly endogenous economy, America entered a new and later stage of modernity. It was no longer the fledgling colony that revolted against the British colonial system. And this new conception of the nation was specially spurred along by the intensification of the ideology of Manifest Destiny, which powerfully united racism and imperial aspirations.

One of the most exemplary visions of this new phase of white supremacy can be found in the diplomacy of Senator Alfred Beveridge. Consider the following excerpt from a speech made before heads of state in 1900, the year in which W.E.B. Du Bois prophesied the century of the color line. It is worth citing a good portion of it given the way he ties together many concerns and aspirations of his day.

Mr. President, the times call for candor. The Philippines are ours forever, “territory belonging to the United States,” as the Constitution calls them. And just beyond the Philippines are China’s illimitable markets. . . . We will not abandon our opportunity in the Orient. We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustee under God, of the civilization of the world. . . . Our largest trade henceforth must be with Asia. The Pacific is our ocean. More and more Europe will manufacture the most it needs, secure from its colonies the most it consumes. Where shall we turn



for consumers of our surplus? Geography answers the question. China is our natural customer. She is nearer to us than to England, Germany, or Russia, the commercial powers of the present and the future. They have moved nearer to China by securing permanent bases on her borders. The Philippines give us a base at the door of all the East.

Lines of navigation from our ports to the Orient and Australia; from the Isthmian Canal to Asia; from all Oriental ports to Australia, converge at and separate from the Philippines. They are a self-supporting, dividend-paying fleet, permanently anchored at a spot selected by the strategy of Providence, commanding the Pacific. And the Pacific is the ocean of the commerce of the future. Most future wars will be conflicts for commerce. The power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world. And, with the Philippines, that power is and will forever be the American republic. ...

My own belief is that there are not 100 men among them who comprehend what Anglo-Saxon self-government even means, and there are over 5,000,000 people to be governed. ... What alchemy will change the oriental quality of their blood and set the self-governing currents of the American pouring through their Malay veins? ... The Declaration [of Independence] applies only to people capable of self-government. How dare any man prostitute this expression of the very elect of self-governing peoples to a race of Malay children of barbarism, schooled in Spanish methods and ideas?<sup>43</sup>

With a robust economy in crisis, an expanded military, a steel navy, and new frontiers to overtake, America could finally be a world or world-historical actor.<sup>44</sup> It began this trajectory through a very short war with Spain, but a long and bloody war against the Philippines.<sup>45</sup> Acquiring the Caribbean and Pacific colonies of a fading Spanish empire would afford the U.S. an opportunity to create an imperial penumbra emanating from its southern and Pacific states. As noted earlier, imperialism is a disfiguring political system of exploitative dominance. It is important to recall, then, that this emanation of control and sovereignty across new frontiers had as its rationale the exclusion of European rivals from colony-making in the American hemisphere, the exploitative control of the American hemisphere, and, we can now see, access to the great Pacific, especially China, market – in short, a hemispherically totalizing and westward-expansive hegemony.

Moreover, this dramatic enlargement of U.S. dominance did not merely happen to absorb the territories of racial others. The inhabitants of these areas were actively racialized. As seen in the speech by Senator Beveridge, the racial ascriptions were demeaning and imputed a radically and backwardly exotic and culturally uneducable nature. Moreover, due to the imperialist configuration of the white supremacy, the implication drawn from this racialization process was that black, brown, and yellow peoples are incapable of self-government. Indeed, Beveridge declared that he would regard Filipino self-government a “prostituting” of the American creed.<sup>46</sup> As President Theodore Roosevelt summed up the times, “altruism took the form of the firm belief that the best thing a white country could do for a colored country was to take it over and let the superior whites administer the affairs of the inferior indigenes. Besides all this, colonies were a badge of importance as far as a nation was concerned ... and were a guarantee that the nation had come of age.”<sup>47</sup> And so the powerful forces that formed the engine of imperialism had as their rudder the racial schema of white supremacy by which to guide their movement.

One of the complicated and troubling developments of U.S. annexation of the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Hawai’i, was the development of a series of Supreme Court verdicts housed under the title “The Insular Cases.”<sup>48</sup> The Supreme Court expressed in these rulings serious ambivalence about the formal status of the new

acquisitions. On the one hand, their thinking revealed the same distorted racial views as other power elites of their day. On the other, they seemed reluctant to render the new Amerasian territories formal colonies. Their compromise was to hint at eventual statehood, like the contiguous territories, but in effect to consign them to an indefinitely-long legal limbo, which lasted for decades in the case of the Philippines (until its independence in 1947) and Hawai'i (until its statehood in 1959), and remains so for Puerto Rico and Guam. The basic political mandate of these new racial places was that the peoples abide by U.S. law but that they receive only an abridged set of its Constitutional protections. Moreover, though they could set up governments modeled after the U.S., their deliverances could be overturned by the U.S. government. Returning to my earlier discussion of the nature of imperialism, the Supreme Court in essence ruled against full sovereignty in the new possessions, sometimes called "the insular possessions." The possessions might be able to dictate their first-order interests, but their higher order interests and political capacities were legitimated by their convergence with the interests and decisions of the U.S. government. On my account, then, the Insular sovereignty of the U.S. over these possessions was, and continues to be in the cases of Puerto Rico and Guam, imperialism. The U.S. certainly does not have a Colonial Office like that which presided over India when it was the crown jewel of the British empire. But it is imperialism by any other name. Early critics certainly discerned something was amiss. They claimed that the "flag does not follow the Constitution," and that any liberty-loving people, presumably like Americans who shook off the shackles of Britain, would grant the formerly colonized peoples either their independence or the full protection of the Constitution.<sup>49</sup> But their protestations are now just so much history. These Amerasian territories, therefore, reveal formal imperialism.

The geographical upshot of these considerations can be put this way. Imagine that after the 1898 invasion and occupation of the Philippines, no Filipinos were allowed to immigrate to the U.S. As a matter of historical fact, this is false since a limited number were allowed to enter under the subcitizen designation of "nationals". But just imagine that there was a complete immigration blockade against Filipinos after 1898. Where would you place a college course on post-1898 Philippine history – in Asian studies or in American studies? If my case has been persuasive, then it ought to be placed in both because a significant part of Philippine history since 1898 has been its negotiation of place within an America enlarged, within an Amerasian empire.<sup>50</sup> The Philippines have attained formal independence since 1947, though arguably their full liberation has been systematically hampered by subtler modes of U.S. imperialism, like some noted in the first section of this essay.<sup>51</sup> In any case, neither Guam nor Puerto Rico have attained even formal independence. And so their histories continue to bear explicit links to America enlarged.

### *Two Cold Wars in Asia*

Although America joined other imperial powers in acquiring territories in Asia and the Pacific, it took some time for it to attain mastery of the region. It was not until the defeat of Japan in WWII that America became the dominant power of the Pacific. Historian Bruce Cumming describes the place of Japan in 20<sup>th</sup> century Pacific imperialist relations in this way:

A.1900-1922: Japan in British-American hegemony

- B. 1922-1941: Japan in American –British hegemony
- C. 1941-1945: Japan as regional hegemon in East Asia
- D. 1945-1970: Japan in American hegemony
- E. 1970-1990s: Japan in American-European hegemony<sup>52</sup>

Many have pointed out that after WWII, Japan quietly rebuilt itself into a wealthy capitalist nation and offered auxiliary military support to the U.S. during the length of the Cold War. There were, however, *two* Cold Wars in Asia. The most familiar one involved the U.S. wars with Korea and with Vietnam. But, as historian Akira Iriye has pointed out, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century leading up to the “hot war” of WWII involved a cold war between Japan and the U.S.<sup>53</sup>

This narrative can begin the same place as that of the U.S. imperial war against the Philippines, namely the China market. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the major European powers dissected Africa after the 1885 Berlin Conference, and developed official colonial bureaucracies and white settler societies in their respective territories. They also divided China, but they did so to form what have been called “spheres of influence,” namely territories over which the respective European power would directly control commerce. It became clear that the great China market would be completely enveloped by European market-grabbing to the exclusion of an imperial late-comer like the United States. So in 1899, Secretary of State John Hay requested that France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, and Japan allow China to maintain territorial integrity and that they not disrupt free commercial concourse in the ports within their respective spheres of influence. The U.S., of course, had little sympathy for China’s sovereignty and freedom. It wanted only that it not be shut of the “illimitable markets” memorialized in Senator Beveridge’s speech. This piece of diplomacy, which roughly succeeded in allowing the U.S. entry to the China market, was called the “Open Door Policy.” Although it did not represent rapacious imperialism of the sort involved in America’s brutal war against Filipinos. It was a limited and informal imperialism that rode piggyback, as it were, on the earlier dominative efforts of European powers. For China could not turn away the imperial nations that came through the “Open Door,” lest it pay the consequences for disrupting commerce no longer under its jurisdiction.<sup>54</sup>

One of the interesting developments here is that Japan was the only nonwhite nation to have its own sphere of influence. In 1854, America’s Commodore Perry and his gunboats forced open Japan to trade with the U.S. This coerced opening led not only to commerce with the West, but to a cultural crisis, which resolved itself in Japan seeking an alternative modernity, one in which Western technology would be combined with a distinctly Japanese spirituality or cultural ethos. This resolution would be configured by a powerful imperialist nationalism that expressed itself eventually in the idea of a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” which was envisioned as a bloc of Asian nations uniting under the leadership of Japan to repel the encroachment of white empires.<sup>55</sup> In some important respects, Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor would be the collision between the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and Manifest Destiny.<sup>56</sup>

Japan’s imperialist ideology meant of course that Japan would need to be an empire. Its first steps toward modern empirehood involved its disputed claims against China over Korea, leading to the 1895 Sino-Japanese War. Several years later, Japan would go to war with Russia, again over Korea. Unlike Japan’s victory over China in 1895, its defeat of a great white nation, Russia, would be the shot heard round the anti-

colonial world. Many colonized nations, however, picked up only on the racial dimension of the war, overlooking the fact that it was an inter-imperial conflict and that many Japanese nationalists held distinctly and complicatedly racist views against other Asians, not simply whites.<sup>57</sup> At the close of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, America called the disputants to the negotiating table in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. There, they worked out the terms of peace, which included a proviso that Russia acknowledge Japan's special sovereignty over Korea. Unknown to most onlookers at the time, however, is that several months earlier, Japan and the U.S. had secretly negotiated the Taft-Katsura Agreement, which divided Asian territories between the two empires to maintain imperial equilibrium. Specifically, the Agreement dictated that the U.S. would allow Japan to maintain rule over Korea and that Japan would allow the U.S. to maintain its colony in the Philippines. America's war against the Philippines, recall had officially concluded in 1902, just three years before the Agreement. This Agreement and the Portsmouth Treaty were clearly cases of manipulative imperialist diplomacy. But they were also expressions of a developing U.S.-Japan racial imperialist Cold War.

With tensions arising over Japan's spheres of influence and with America's severe racism against Japanese immigrants to the U.S., Japan agreed in 1907 to the Gentleman's Agreement, which dictated that Japan would "voluntarily" slow the immigration flow to the U.S. And in 1908, the Root-Takahira Agreement was signed. It was essentially a kind of Monroe Doctrine of the Far East, a commitment to maintain the peaceable imperialist status quo, including the terms of the Taft-Katsura Agreement and the Open Door Policy. It was commonly thought that without this Agreement, war may have become inevitable. As we know in hindsight, of course, the Root-Takahira Agreement could not permanently stave off an inter-imperial war in the Pacific, as Pearl Harbor and later Hiroshima and Nagasaki would prove. One of the final acts of the cold phase of the war was Japan's invasion of northeast China in the early 1930s. Historian John Dower describes the last days of the first Cold War this way:

This exercise [the creation of a puppet state in Northeast China (Manchukuo)] in what we now euphemistically refer to as a regime change was subsequently extended to China south of the Great Wall, where the eruption of all-out war in 1937 left Japan in control of the entire eastern seaboard and a population of some 200 million Chinese. In 1941, bogged down in China and desperate for additional strategic resources, the imperial war machine advanced into the colonial enclaves of Southeast Asia (French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, America's Philippines colony and Great Britain's Hong Kong, Malaya and Burma). The attack on Pearl Harbor was in today's terminology a pre-emptive strike aimed at delaying America's response to this so-called liberation of Asia.<sup>58</sup>

Dower also describes how the ensuing Pacific theater of WWII was among other things a race war. He meticulously shows that the level of savagery and the pervasion of distorted racialisms on both sides were simply not present in U.S. combat against German troops.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, this war in the Pacific, in both its cold and hot phases, was a race war and an inter-imperialist war.

I think it is clear from the narrative I have offered that there is ample evidence of the functioning of a racial and imperialist U.S. state in the steps leading up to American hegemony of the Pacific.<sup>60</sup> Earlier, I described a variety of ways in which imperialism might be expressed. Special attention was given to various forms of diplomacy as codifications and symptoms of imperial planning and racial thinking. Now, of course, not

everything that transpired in the Pacific involving the U.S. was imperialist or supportive of white supremacy. But the overall pattern seems undeniable. And this was established without relying solely on references to war and other more brazen manifestations of racial empire. In the preceding section, I have offered some thoughts on Vietnam, and of course the case of Vietnam is probably the most discussed of any of America's sordid dealings with Pacific and Asian peoples. So let me conclude this section by considering the other major war of the U.S.-Russia Cold War.

As noted already, one of the most important aspects to examine in identifying imperialism is structures of diplomacy. This is because they are implemented by state actors, which are principle referents in imperialism, and they codify or otherwise convey unequal relations. Moreover, they often, as it were, fold within them the more aggressive or destructive means of dominance in the sense that structures of diplomacy are often configured by the threat of aggression and are designed to obviate such confrontations, often at great cost to the more vulnerable nation. Typically, unjust wars are instances of one blatant kind of imperialism, but they are so only for as long as the war itself. The unequal treaty-making and diplomacy that usually follows the cessation of unjust wars, therefore, extends the condition of imperialism in a new phase for as long as the resulting legislation is normatively binding and made to be causally effective. Indeed, even *just* wars, upon cessation, can lead to imperialist relations if they are followed by diplomacy conducive to parasitism. Although I cannot take up this issue here, my own sense of the history of wars is that the phenomenon of imperial diplomacy following *just* wars is not an anomaly, but the hidden norm.

But perhaps most interesting of all is unequal diplomacy that defines the very discourse upon which criteria of just war are applied. For example, shortly after its formation, the United Nations in 1950 used criteria of just war to condemn the North Korean invasion of South Korea and to justify a U.S.-led international coalition against North Korea.<sup>61</sup> But why precisely did the North Korean invasion technically count as invasion or nation-to-nation aggression, as opposed to civil war? The latter judgment would mostly disqualify the case for just intervention. The reason for the former judgment is that at the Potsdam Conference at the close of WWII, Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt decided by fiat to create two countries, and they did so without any Koreans present. By radically distorted, Monroe Doctrine-like diplomacy, the beginnings of the cold war had been etched onto the DMZ line dividing the two nations along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. For North Koreans, and in fact many South Koreans, the Korean war was a civil war and a war of national liberation: We have fought the Japanese imperialists, who would subjugate our people, and now must fight off U.S. imperialists, who would make us pawns in their struggle for global control. Even if this discourse can be shown ultimately to be misguided, it ought to be taken seriously. And it certainly ought not to be rendered unintelligible by the very terms of the Potsdam Conference and the subsequent U.N. permission of international military involvement. Perhaps another way to put all this is that Noam Chomsky's tendency to focus on, say Henry Kissinger, as opposed to, say, General McArthur is exactly and profoundly right. If this is so, then Michael Walzer's classic and excellent work involving the casuistry of just war determinations ought to attend to the unjust peace and unjust diplomacy that form the shaping, sometimes defining, context surrounding and pervading his piecemeal focus on just and unjust wars.

In the decades following the armistice that ended the Korean War in 1953, a series of dictators would be propped up in the South Korean government, a process which was condoned or actively encouraged by the U.S. With the escalation of the Cold War, the U.S. supported pro-capitalist, pro-Western leaders even if they were dictators because they could be more easily managed and nothing was more important than combating communism. Moreover, the U.S. seemed to encourage this sort of government by proxy wherever it could install such potentially manageable leaders and would persist in supporting them even when they turned out to be more unruly than anticipated. The striking feature of such disfiguring political dominance is that this was taking place in so many areas of the colored or Third World. And so it indicates a racialized double contradiction in the alleged safeguarding of democracy in U.S. foreign policy. First, the U.S. maintained racism at home while preaching liberty abroad. And second, the U.S. advocated dictatorships in colored countries while preaching democracy at home and abroad. Race theorists, of course, point to the first as an example of white supremacy. But often the second is not cited as an illustration of white supremacy. Perhaps this is because the issue is more about democracy and dictatorships than race. With a narrow focus on this or that particular regime, I think I might agree. My concern regarding the second type of contradiction, however, appeals to the geographical pattern of dictator installations, namely that they have tended to occur in nations of racial others. This does not mean that the U.S. state has functioned racially simply in virtue of designing explicitly racialized undemocratic reforms, though it has initiated such reforms. It may also have functioned racially merely by producing effects that tend to entrench preexisting racial hierarchy at the regional or global level. As described throughout this section, a battery of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century diplomatic measures and wars formed the crucible out of which the strategies of U.S. Cold War imperialism were developed and out of which the geography of U.S. white supremacy expanded. So the U.S. simply by doing what it does, simply by maintaining the status quo, may yet act as a racial state. Thus, as discussed in the first section of this essay, the second contradiction points to lateral consolidation of white supremacy. And U.S. Cold War imperialism, broadly and liberally applied, has been the vehicle.

## **Conclusion**

The distance between Europe and Cathay (China), going in a *westward* direction, was once believed to be the span of the Atlantic Ocean. Although it is well-known that Columbus set sail to lay hold of the Eastern side of Asia, it is worth dwelling on this commonplace for just a moment. Far from his point of departure and certainly from his imagined destination, Columbus came ashore in the Americas. But he believed the land to be South Asia – hence the early name “West Indies”. The so-called discovery of America, then, was an accident, an accident borne of Cathay fever and a colossal cartographical error. Insofar as it is exemplary of white westward expansionism, Columbus’ mission achieves completion in America’s imperial traversal of the Pacific. In the foregoing, I have focused less on, say, gunboats setting course across the Pacific, so much as the expansion of America itself, as a network of material, normative, and power relations, stretching out across this final ocean to occupy a formidable presence in the Pacific and Asia, not to mention the entire American hemisphere.

We get a sense of America's unique imperialist history and geography in an early passage of the *locus classicus* of studies of orientalism, namely Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

Americans will not feel quite the same about the Orient, which for them is much more likely to be associated very differently with the Far East (China and Japan mainly). Unlike the Americans, the French and the British – less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss – have had a long tradition of what I shall be calling *Orientalism*, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. . . . In contrast, the American understanding of the Orient will seem considerably less dense, although our recent Japanese, Korean, and Indochinese adventures ought now to be creating a more sober, more realistic "Oriental" awareness. Moreover, the vastly expanded American political and economic role in the Near East (the Middle East) makes great claims on our understanding of that Orient.<sup>62</sup>

In this vein, consider too the conservative White House strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski's vision that likens the world to a Grand Chessboard. On this model, it is and always has been the massive Eurasian sector that must be dominated in order to attain global hegemony. So what Said has explained as European Orientalism is a manifestation of imperial movement across the Grand Chessboard. And, of course, Said repudiates what Brzezinski commends as advances in the great struggle for planetary control.

With the foregoing account of U.S. imperialism, we now have an unusual vantage point from which to view the so-called Grand Chessboard and the special place of Eurasia. It is precisely as an Amerasian empire that the U.S. has circumnavigated the world from *both* directions to infiltrate and dominate the affairs of Europe's Orient and thereby to consolidate its position as a singular world power. The geography of this newest phase of hegemony is the most current terminus of the spatial trajectory described throughout this essay. Note, however, that the intermediary step in the trajectory, the development of an Amerasian system, is typically ignored. Too often, the story begins with European imperialism, discusses the Cold War, cites Vietnam, and then moves to the current singularity of American global power.

But there is perhaps another way to put my concern, one having to do with *prophetic geography*. In 1997, Brzezinski ominously stated, "he who controls Eurasia controls the world." In doing so, he partly echoed and certainly extended a prophecy delivered over 100 years ago by another White House strategist.<sup>63</sup> In 1900, Senator Albert Beveridge, casting his gaze upon the Philippines and the great China market, declared, "The power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world."<sup>64</sup> Perhaps, then, the Senator would have applauded Brzezinski as a kind of spiritual protégé. In any case, he would have found reassurance knowing that in early 2003, much of the U.S. Pacific Command, whose Navy maintains watch over the Indian Ocean as well as the Pacific, was stationed off the coast of Southwest Asia, departing from bases in California, Hawai'i, and Guam. It is true, as many have pointed out, that America seems to have extended the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary to encompass the world. And it is true that Iraq bears some comparison to Vietnam. I have tried to explain the wider spatial trajectory that has led to this deeply troubling condition.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1993, an agenda-setting anthology was published, calling upon American Studies and other scholars to

<sup>2</sup> A provocative examination of this phenomenon, specifically in the work of John Rawls, has been offered by Jeffrey Paris, one of the few philosophers to be addressing the problem I have described. See his “After Rawls,” *Social Theory and Practice* 28, no.4 (Oct. 2002). And an important attempt to address this lacuna, and from which I have learned a great deal, has been produced by Eduardo Mendieta, “Eurasia and Asia: American Empire and World History,” ms.

<sup>3</sup> There are at least three notable exceptions to the general neglect by *mainstream* American philosophers in addressing U.S. imperialism. The first was the formation of the Society for Philosophy and Public Affairs in 1969. It was created out of the general desire to maintain philosophy’s relevance to public issues and to be a voice to “challenge the widespread complacency about American institutions and practices.” As one might have guessed, at the heart of this formative impulse was the “concern, outrage, and sense of helplessness aroused in varying degrees among philosophers by the Vietnam War.” And in spite of the fact that it might “seem pointless to detect three nonsequiturs and four evasions per dropped megaton,” they hold out the prospect that philosophy might bring valuable critical perspective to the public debate. These convictions of the Society led to an edited volume of essays on international ethics, the introduction for which is the source of the quotations in the earlier sentences: Virginia Held, Sidney Morgenbesser, and Thomas Nagel, eds., *Philosophy, Morality, and International Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974). Since then, I do not know of any essays published in the journal *Philosophy and Public Affairs* that directly engage with the issue of imperialism, though again proximate topics do receive attention. The second exception is Bertrand Russell, who took the initiative to form an international war crimes tribunal to determine, among other things, whether the U.S. was guilty of genocide in Vietnam. The commission, which included Jean-Paul Sartre, did condemn the U.S. of genocide. See Bertrand Russell, *War Crimes in Vietnam* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967). The third major exception to the norm of silence from the mainstream of the profession is virtually an institution unto himself: Noam Chomsky. No longer satisfied with working solely, and of course brilliantly so, in linguistic theory, he began in the 60’s a long career as an outspoken critic of U.S. empire, beginning with *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969). In fact, the acclaim he has received for his work in politics may confound my initial placement of him under the rubric of mainstream philosophy. It does seem clear, however, that in the 1950’s and much of the 1960’s, his superb work in philosophy of language ensured that controversies over him at the time would be relegated to issues like deep grammar rather than, say, the military-industrial complex. Interestingly, Chomsky and Russell converged to an extent in their practical politics: Chomsky wrote for the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, “Two Essays on Cambodia,” *The Spokesman*, pamphlet no.5, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> For philosophical discussion of Asia and Asian Americans in the race dialogue, see Craig Ihara and David H. Kim, eds., *Asian Pacific American Philosophy: Other Bodies and Other Borders in the Philosophy of Race*, a special edition of *The American Philosophical Association Newsletter (on the Status of Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies)* 2, no.2 (Summer 2003).

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to observe that in the theory of internal colonialism, which was popular in the late 1960s and the 70s, the conception of America’s domestic racial communities was absorbed into the originally externally-focused framework of racial imperialism.

<sup>6</sup> This account differs from the one offered by Sidney Morgenbesser, one of the very few mainstream philosophers to address the nature of imperialism. See his essay, “Imperialism: Some Preliminary Distinctions,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 3, no.1 (Autumn, 1973), p.3-44, reprinted in Virginia Held, Sidney Morgenbesser, and Thomas Nagel, eds., *Philosophy, Morality, and International Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974). Very quickly, let me note that on his four-part account of a sufficient condition for imperialistic state action, he cites that the state in question must be “the center of an empire”, which he goes on to elaborate in terms of annexations and colonization. This strikes me as circular because part of what we want in an account of imperialism is what makes a nation the center of an empire. See p.11-14.

<sup>7</sup> Clearly, this analogy is inspired by Harry Frankfurt’s work. See his *The Importance of What We Care about: Philosophical Essays* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> One highly developed account of exploitation is Alan Wertheimer, *Exploitation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Henry M. Christman, ed., *The Essential Works of Lenin* (Mineola, NY: Dover Pub., Inc., 1987); Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980);



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Peter J. Cain and Mark Harrison, eds., *Imperialism: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies* [vols.1-3] (New York: Routledge, 2001); Ronald H. Chilcote, *Imperialism: Theoretical Directions* (Amherst: Humanity Books, )

<sup>10</sup> My account leaves open the question of whether a relationship like a U.N. trusteeship can be formed without it simply being a pretext for or devolving into imperialism. This is important because I do not wish to pack into the content of the definition every sort of non-reciprocal international relationship. As a purely conceptual point, it seems that there could be a *just* form of a legally paternalistic international relationship, not unlike extraordinary cases in which caretakers can within bounds dictate and tend to the interests of the adult individual who is under their care. In practice, of course, a U.N. trusteeship may simply amount to a subtler variant of imperialism. With the many lessons of history, a nation's assurances of just paternalism should be met with the most stringent scrutiny possible, and perhaps even that is not enough of a safeguard to permit such a relationship.

<sup>11</sup> I have learned from many works on this theme: J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965); Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (New York: Routledge Press, 2003); Henry M. Christman, ed., *The Essential Works of Lenin* (Mineola, NY: Dover Pub., Inc., 1987); Joseph Schumpeter, *Imperialism: Social Classes* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955); W.E.B. Du Bois, *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., Inc., 1945); Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1966); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (NY: Random House Inc., 1979); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (New York: Verso, 1991); Jim M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993); Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of the "Other" and the Myth of Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 1995); and Richard H. Chilcote, *Imperialism: Theoretical Directions* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> After all, Lenin had to write an involved little book on the topic. And in it, he criticizes some exceptional theorists, like J.A. Hobson and Karl Kautsky, for mischaracterizing the role of economics in imperialism.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> I personally am not wedded to every detail of the account of imperialism I have advanced. The desiderata of maximum plausibility (not defensibility) and maximum compatibility with other accounts lead me to characterize imperialism in the way I have.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p.180-182. This is but one example. Interestingly, they too offer an historical account of the distinctive character of the rise of U.S. empire. See p.160-182.

<sup>16</sup> Of course, their view could be that technically speaking what they call "Empire" is *not a new phase* of imperialism, but a wholly new and total social condition that dates imperialism in the historical past and makes the notion of empire merely a useful *analogy*. If this is their view, then it is not eliminativist and I need not worry about showing its reductive powers because quite simply it is not a theory of imperialism, but of post-imperialism.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p.20-21.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p.37-39.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald Sundstrom, "Race and Place: Social Space and the Production of Human Kinds," *Philosophy and Geography*, 6, no.1 (2003). See also David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), ch.8, and Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), ch.2.

<sup>20</sup> David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, ch.5.

<sup>22</sup> Jason Burke, "Roll Credits," *Guardian Unlimited*, Thursday, April 17, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Cpl. Jeremy M. Vought, "Big Screen Cunny visits the 1<sup>st</sup> FSSG in Kuwaiti Desert," *Story Identification Number: 200352813378*. Submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> Force Service Support Group.

<sup>24</sup> Tony Karon, "Iraq is not Vietnam, but ...," in *Viewpoint: Tony Karon*, Time Online Edition, Tuesday, June 24, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> I ignore here the implications of the Vietnam fantasies. See Marilyn Blatt Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991); Darrell Hamamoto, *Monitored Peril: Asian Americans and the Politics of TV Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Tom

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Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); and H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and other American Fantasies* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Stuart C. Miller, "Our Mylai of 1900: Americans in the Philippine Insurrection," in Marilyn Blatt Young, ed., *American Expansionism: The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., Inc., 1973), p.104.

<sup>27</sup> See the website of the Department of Defense, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (DIOR): <http://web1.whs.osd.mil/diorhome.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> This idea of pre-1898 American isolationism can be found as far back as J.A. Hobson's 1902 classic, *Imperialism: A Study* [reprint](Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), p.22.

<sup>29</sup> Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Sovereignty and the U.S. Supreme Court: The Masking of Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); and Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian Hating and Empire Building* (New York: Schocken Books, 1990).

<sup>30</sup> Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire* [rev. ed.] (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), and Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>31</sup> A great book on the Cold War context of the civil rights is Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Ernest R. May, *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Gaddis Smith, *The Last Years of the Monroe Doctrine, 1945-1993* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994); and Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1993), *The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), and *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

<sup>33</sup> Walter La Feber, *The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective*, p.44.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p.40.

<sup>35</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p.251.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

<sup>37</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color*, p.273-4.

<sup>38</sup> Indeed, many of the demeaning political cartoons of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century depicted the Chinese as beastly. See Marlon Hom, Lorraine Dong, and Philip Choy, eds., *Coming Man: 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Perceptions of the Chinese* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995).

<sup>39</sup> Thanks go to Eddie Glaude Jr. and Gary Mar for pointing out to me this important feature of Harlan's dissent.

<sup>40</sup> Brook Thomas, ed., *Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford Books, 1997), p.58.

<sup>41</sup> Mae Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *The Journal of American History*, 86, no.1 (June 1999).

<sup>42</sup> Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts* (Durham: Duke University Press, ), p.4.

<sup>43</sup> Senator Alfred J. Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," in Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephan Roskamm Shalom, eds., *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), p.23-26.

<sup>44</sup> Richard H. Miller, *American Imperialism in 1898: The Quest for National Fulfillment* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1970); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963); Julius W. Pratt, *America's Colonial Experiment: How the United States Gained, Governed, and in part Gave away a Colonial Empire* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1951); James C. Thomson, Jr., Peter W. Stanley, and John Curtis Perry, *Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981); Marilyn Blatt Young, ed., *American Expansionism: The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., Inc., 1973).

<sup>45</sup> Guerilla warfare continued after 1902, but that year is often designated as the official end. As I noted in the earlier section of this essay, so little – too little – focuses on this important first U.S. war in Asia and first major overseas U.S. colonial war.

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<sup>46</sup> Space does not permit fuller discussion of U.S.-Philippine relations. See Epifanio San Juan, Jr., *The Philippine Temptation: Dialectics of Philippine-U.S. Literary Relations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); Vincente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Neferti X.M. Tadiar, "Sexual Economies in the Asia-Pacific Community," in *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, ed. Arif Dirlik (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1993); Julian Go and Anne L. Foster, eds., *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); and Ronald Sundstrom, "Falling into the Olongapo River," in *The American Philosophical Association Newsletter (on the Status of Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies)* 2, no.2, (Summer 2003)

<sup>47</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Colonial Policies of the United States* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1937), p.74.

<sup>48</sup> Hawai'i had a different trajectory. The Hawaiian kingdom was overthrown by U.S. business interests in 1893, was annexed in 1898, and made a state in 1959. And American Samoa was acquired from Germany in 1899.

<sup>49</sup> For more on the complicated legal history, see Owen Fiss, *Troubled Beginnings of the Modern State, 1888-1910* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1993); Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall, eds., *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); and Juan R. Torruella, *The Supreme Court and Puerto Rico: The Doctrine of Separate and Unequal* (Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1985)

<sup>50</sup> An existentially probing account of this can be found in Ronald Sundstrom, "Falling into the Olongapo River."

<sup>51</sup> Arguably, the Philippines is still linked to the U.S. by an informal or neo-imperialism. See fn 46 for more details on such a case.

<sup>52</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Parallax Visions*, p.27.

<sup>53</sup> See his *Pacific Estrangements: Japanese and American Experience, 1897-1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) and *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations* (Chicago: Imprint Publications, Inc., 1992).

<sup>54</sup> Marilyn Blatt Young, *The Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895-1901* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); and Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

<sup>55</sup> For more philosophical aspects, see the excellent essay by Yoko Arisaka, "The Nishida Enigma: The Principle of the New World Order," *Monumenta Nipponica* 51 1 (Spring 1996), p.81-99.

<sup>56</sup> For more on U.S.-Japan relations, see *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

<sup>57</sup> For analysis of some of the complexity of Japan's racial views, see Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race, and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>58</sup> John W. Dower, "Other Japanese Occupation," *The Nation*, July 7, 2003, p.12.

<sup>59</sup> John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

<sup>60</sup> For more critical perspectives on U.S.-Asia relations, see Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); Arif Dirlik, ed., *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993); Bruce Cumings, *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); and Gary Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History* (WA: University of Washington Press, 1994); John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987)

<sup>61</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997); and Martin Hart-Landsberg, *Korea: Division, Reunification, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998)

<sup>62</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (NY: Random House Inc., 1979), p.1-2.

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<sup>63</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p.xiv. Thanks go to Eduardo Mendieta for suggesting this book to me and for critical discussion of it.

<sup>64</sup> Senator Alfred J. Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," in Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephan Roskamm Shalom, eds., *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance*, p.23-26.