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Reseñas

Hagimoto, Koichi. *Between Empires. Martí, Rizal, and the Intercolonial Alliance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. [Hipertexto](#)

In his 1991 essay, “Colonialidad y Modernidad/ Racionalidad,” Aníbal Quijano first proposes the concept of coloniality. He argues that globalization, as a sociopolitical, economic and cultural system that continues to legitimate colonial structures of power, began with the constitution of the Americas –or what Enrique Dussel would later call “the invention of the Americas.” The colonization of what is now commonly called Latin America restructured the global order by positing Europe as the center of the world and Latin America as its periphery. This restructuring of the world was legitimated by the idea of race and the social construction of racial classification, which in turn created new historical identities that became intertwined with the division of labor. For Quijano, the understanding of race –as the technology by which global power is structured, produced and naturalized– explains the continuation of the unequal balance of power and social discrimination in the present forms of neocolonialism, internal colonialism and globalization.

By locating the problems of postcolonial societies in the persistence of coloniality and highlighting the importance of Spanish colonialism in the construction of European modernity and subsequent forms of colonialism and imperialism, the work of Quijano and other Latin Americanists proposed a reconsideration of postcolonial thought. During the 1990s, the field of postcolonial studies in North America mainly focused on the age of European high imperialism largely represented by the British and French empires. Subsequently, the decolonization of ex-British and French colonies in Asia, Africa and the Middle East became the central areas of examination of postcolonial studies. The response of Latin Americanists to the postcolonial turn called attention to the blind spot of postcolonial studies: the material, ideological and epistemological influence of the Spanish conquest of the Americas on all succeeding forms of colonialism.

Koichi Hagimoto’s book *Between Empires: Martí, Rizal, and the Intercolonial Alliance* renews this Latin Americanist contribution to postcolonial thought by presenting a comparative study of José Martí and José Rizal, which offers a view of postcoloniality in Cuba and the Philippines during the end of Spanish imperial rule at the close of the nineteenth century. It is through the mutual experience of Spanish imperialism that Martí and Rizal articulate their anticolonialism and frame their modes of resistance. Indeed, the trans-pacific landscape of Spanish imperialism not only calls for a transnational

framework to examine anticolonial discourse, but more importantly, as Hagimoto argues, necessitates a trans-regional and trans-oceanic framework. This topography of empire persists after the so-called Spanish American War in 1898, which heralded a shift in the global order: the United States would replace Europe as the leading imperial power albeit in the guise of indirect rule and territorial expansionism. It is within this historical context —caught between two empires— that Hagimoto proposes an intercolonial alliance between Cuba and the Philippines. As he claims, his allusion to an alliance does not imply a concrete coalition between Cuban and Filipino nationalist revolutionaries, but rather, “highlights the possibility of a collective consciousness of resistance that would juxtapose colonized peoples in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia” (6). The conceptualization of an intercolonial alliance shows the existence of a collective form of anti-imperialism in the nineteenth century many years before the development of a “Third-World” consciousness and anti-imperial collaboration that culminated in the Bandung Conference of non-aligned nations in 1955, and is today associated with the “Global South.” In the four main chapters that make up his book, Hagimoto presents an extensive study of the writings of Martí and Rizal that examines the continuities between the two writers, as well as the historical connections between the Cuban and Filipino independence movements. Chapter 1, “Anticolonial Melodramas: Gender Relations and the Discourse of Resistance in *Noli me tangere* and *Lucía Jerez*,” centers on Martí and Rizal’s use of melodrama in their respective contemporaneous novels. Hagimoto’s reading of Martí’s *Lucía Jerez* (1885) and Rizal’s *Noli me tangere* (1887) focuses on the question of gender relations. He argues that in these novels the significance of male and female relations are two-fold: on one hand, certain gender relations represent the imperial order, and on the other, the possibility of anticolonial resistance. Although the examination of melodrama is in the trajectory of Latin Americanist studies of the romantic novel as national allegory proposed by such prominent works as Doris Sommer’s *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991), Hagimoto’s study of Martí’s and Rizal’s novels complicates these previous models. Sommer’s theory of national foundation is premised on the narrative technology of certain nineteenth century Latin American novels that allegorize the consolidation of Latin American nations through the consummation of a heterosexual relationship between individuals of different classes, ethnicities and regions. However in Martí’s *Lucía Jerez* and Rizal’s *Noli*, as Hagimoto argues, it is the impossibility of such a heterosexual union that offers the possibility for anticolonialism. As such, “the romance in these two texts is not so much a way to imagine national consolidation through sexual desire as to expose the crisis of such conciliation and to challenge the hegemony of Spanish colonialism” (23). The crisis of the Spanish imperial order is represented by the inverting of dominant gender roles in both novels: female characters are portrayed as authority figures, while male characters are figured as dominated and controlled by women. The reversal of the conventional relation between gender and power challenges Spanish imperialism and articulates an anticolonial resistance. Thus, as Hagimoto acutely points out, the intercolonial alliance between Martí and Rizal produces a “foundational fiction” not of national solidarity, but one with an emphasis on the possibility of resistance against Spanish imperialism.

Chapter 2, “Theoretical Performance in the Manifesto: Comparative Analysis of Martí’s ‘Manifesto de Montecristi’ and Rizal’s ‘Filipinas dentro de cien años,’” explores Martí’s

and Rizal's political writings, in which nationalism is envisioned as a viable response to Spanish colonialism. Hagimoto's comparative study of Martí's "Manifiesto de Montecristi" (1895) and Rizal's "Filipinas dentro de cien años" (1889-1890) shows how the two writers turn to the manifesto form to construct national solidarity. Examining the narrative technology of the manifesto through Jacques Derrida's examination of the United States' "Declaration of Independence" and Etienne Balibar's theorization of the relation between "people" and "nation," Hagimoto deftly analyzes the theatrical nature of the manifesto form, which like theater enables the invention of an imaginary reality and an idealized national subject. Martí's utterance of a Cuban "people" or Rizal's utterance of a Filipino "race" represents a particular speech act whereby the collective national subject of "people" or "race" is created within the text. In other words, before the announcement of (Cuban) "people" or (Filipino) "race" in the manifesto, it was not an already-liberated subject, but a yet-to-be-liberated subject that was in the process of becoming. The performative nature of the manifesto constructs an alternative national history. Similar to the temporal gap and tension in the articulation of a national subject, the temporality of national history resides in the simultaneous recuperation of lost (past) history and an invention of an unknown utopic future. Given this temporal schema of nation, the declaration of a national subject becomes at the same time a political act: the time has arrived in national history for the invented national subject to emerge as a political agent and raise arms against the colonizer. However, as Hagimoto argues, the unified national subject in both Martí's and Rizal's texts does not only emerge in opposition to the Spanish imperial subject as the agent of anticolonial resistance. By attempting to create a unified national subject, ethnic, regional, class and gender differences must be reconciled within the colonies causing certain groups to be marginalized as not "genuine" national citizens. The two manifestos delineate the borders of inclusion and exclusion by which the specific contour of a political community is determined. Their goal is therefore not solely to declare a possible revolution against the Spanish empire and to call for national independence. The two texts also "attempt to effectively educate readers and convince them to participate in the development of nationalization as well as naturalization without causing any disturbance that may result in the destruction of such imaginary solidarity" (89). As Hagimoto elucidates in his reading of the Cuban and Filipino writers' political texts, the cross-colonial relation between Martí and Rizal sheds light on the historical juncture between anti-imperial resistance and the project of nation building.

Chapter 3, "Cuban and Filipino Calibans Confront the Modern Empire," shifts the focus to Martí's and Rizal's views on the United States and its flourishing imperial ambitions. Martí's views on the U.S. where he lived for fifteen years is narrated in his *Escenas norteamericanas* (1880-1895), while Rizal's impressions and observations of the U.S. empire, which he visited for less than a month (between April 28 and May 16, 1888), had a strong influence in his political ideas. Although their paths never crossed, Martí and Rizal were both in the United States at the same time. As Hagimoto proposes we can attempt to imagine a dialogue between the two anticolonial writers whose "ideas come together in this late-nineteenth-century metropolitan city, a city that would soon become the hub of a modern U.S. empire" (89). Coming from Spanish colonies, Martí and Rizal view the United States in terms of both negative and positive aspects: on one hand, they both celebrate the North American nation's industrialization and its principle

of freedom. On the other hand, they articulate critical views of domestic racism and economic disparity in the country. Furthermore, as Hagimoto highlights, they were ahead of their time in recognizing the threat of the North American empire, as they both condemn U.S. expansionism in Asia and Latin America. Just as Martí and Rizal espouse parallel views of the United States, they also translate certain spheres of U.S. society into their own contexts of Cuba/Latin America and the Philippines. Hagimoto's analysis of three seemingly unrelated chronicles by Martí – “Emerson” (1882), “El terremoto de Charleston” (1886), and “Nuestra América” (1891) – shows how the Cuban writer integrates the Emersonian view of “nature” and develops it into the symbol of the “natural man” who embodies Latin America's force of anticolonial resistance against the U.S. empire. Following a similar trajectory, Rizal translates the image of Native (North) American warriors onto the Filipino colonial context thereby resignifying the term *indio*. By his formulation of the “Indios Bravos,” Rizal proposes the politicization of the Filipino *indio* as the subject of resistance that would subvert the racist and disparaging use of the term. In Rizal's novel *El filibusterismo*, which references the U.S. empire, Hagimoto shows how the Filipino “filibuster” can be compared to the “Indios Bravos.” Hagimoto's claim that both Martí and Rizal problematized “the imperial project by secretly penetrating the colonizer's discourse” is pertinent. Martí and Rizal's writings on the U.S. demonstrates how the intercolonial alliance was also articulated against the new U.S. empire. In a discursive sense, as Hagimoto suggests, they were direct precursors of the “Global South.”

Chapter 4, “Conversations across the Pacific: Masonry, Epistolary, and Journal Writing,” concentrates on the relatively little known communication between Cubans and Filipinos after the premature deaths of Martí and Rizal. In this chapter, Hagimoto shows how the intercolonial alliance encompasses not only the symbolic dialogue between the two writers, but also the epistolary exchange and the sharing of journal articles across the Pacific between 1896 and 1898, as well as the conversations in Masonic lodges established by Filipinos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Spaniards in Madrid. Hagimoto's examination of freemasonry, letters and journal articles contributes to the study of modern technology's (such as transportation and print culture) fundamental role in creating cross-regional and transoceanic alliances. Friends and contemporaries of Martí and Rizal, such as the Filipino Mariano Ponce (his *Cartas sobre la revolución*, 1897-1900) and the Cuban José Alberto Izquierdo, were involved in this trans-pacific network whereby they not only knew of each other's struggles –as referenced by journals such as *La República Cubana* and *La Solidaridad*– but also encouraged and supported each other's revolutions against Spanish imperialism. In an analysis of one of Ponce's letters, Hagimoto shows how Ponce uses metaphor to bring together the two colonies in symbolic terms thereby constructing a single collective entity fighting against Spanish imperialism. Ponce appeals to Martí as a historical memory that not only inspired Cubans, but also Filipinos to fight for national liberation. As historical memory, Martí becomes a rhetoric and political device that enables the envisioning of an intercolonial alliance between the Caribbean island and the Southeast Asian archipelago. As Hagimoto suggests, the ghosts of Martí and Rizal continue to “haunt” not only Cuban and Filipino national spaces, but also the networks, relations and movements forged by those opposing imperialism and the coloniality of power.

Between Empires: Martí, Rizal, and the Intercolonial Alliance is a timely book in our era of global capitalism and neocolonialism. Its proposal of an intercolonial alliance intervenes in the current discussion surrounding postcolonialism and area studies. First, it provincializes Europe by examining Latin America and Southeast Asia as the subjects and agents of anticolonial resistance and not as secondary actors whose sole importance lies in their connection to European movements, whether they be Marxist, anarchist or liberal. In other words, the global or transnational nature of their collective resistance is not founded upon the mediation of Europe or the acknowledgement of the West. As Hagimoto claims, it is precisely Eurocentrism as an epistemological framework that disallows the possibility of a direct interaction between Latin America and Asia. In this Eurocentric vision, as exemplified by Hegel's conceptual map of world history, all areas are defined by their relation to Europe.

The Other-Other relationship personified by the imaginary dialogue between Martí and Rizal questions the notion of a bounded "area" as constructed by the area studies knowledge production model. The alliance forged between the Caribbean/Latin America and Southeast Asia/Asia crosses the Pacific Ocean and links the two putatively discrete regions. Hagimoto's claim for a trans-pacific cross-colonial cultural politics calls into question the idea of "Latin America." This is the second introjection of the conceptualization of an intercolonial alliance. By requiring the expansion of the geo-cultural concept of "Latin America" (as well as that of "Asia"), Hagimoto's transoceanic schema calls for a thorough critique of area studies and its afterlives as cultural essentialism, geographical over-determinism and Eurocentrism continue to condition our way of making sense of the world. Although the Philippines are geographically *outside* Latin America, "they equally belong to the Hispanic imperial and postcolonial circle" (18). If the Latin Americanist contribution to postcolonial studies can be attributed to the conceptualization of the colonality of power and the emphasis on the relevance of Spanish imperialism and the constitution of the Americas in understanding postcoloniality, Hagimoto expands this discussion by asking: what is the idea of "Latin America"? If we see nineteenth century Filipino history as integral to Cuban and Latin American movements of decolonization and liberation, how can we (re)imagine "Latin America"? In other words, where is the "Latin America" whose experience of Spanish conquest and the colonality of power sheds light on the global condition of colonality today? These timely questions explored by Hagimoto represent the theoretical currency of the burgeoning field of Trans-Pacific Studies, as well as the issues that are at stake in the wake of postcolonial studies, Latinamericanism and area studies.

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