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LAS AGUAS DE LOS MARES OCCIDENTALES:

THE LATIN PACIFIC IMAGINARY

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

LITERATURE

by

Kendra Poppy

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The Thesis of Kendra Poppy
is approved:

Professor Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Chair

Professor Susan Gillman

Professor Rob Wilson

Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

Kendra Poppy

Las Aguas de Los Mares Occidentales: The Latin Pacific Imaginary

To date, there is a dearth of scholarship on the intellectual and mercantile networks that unified the ocean the west coast of the hemisphere; this is especially striking in context of the hemispheric and oceanic “turn” in American studies. Here, I begin to redress this absence by assembling an archive of work by Independence-era politicians and writers from throughout North and South America who envisioned a geographically and ideologically “western” ocean, which I call the Latin Pacific.

From the end of the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century, the Latin Pacific was portrayed as a cohesive region, a space of abundant resources and the domain of interconnected traders and travelers. This geographic imaginary inspired the literature of writers such as Vicente Perez Rosales, Herman Melville, and Henry Dana Jr, who willed this space into being through language, oftentimes in the futurist rhetoric of the frontier.

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Introduction

“Las aguas de los mares occidentales,” or, the waters of the western seas, is a phrase taken from Vicente Perez Rosales’s *Recuerdos del Pasado, 1814-1860*. (17) Rosales is a canonical nineteenth century Chilean author and politician who traveled to the California gold fields in December of 1848, a trip that is recorded in *Recuerdos*. The early date of Rosales’ voyage to California, months before the fabled 49ers, is due to the fact that news of gold, which traveled aboard ships, reached Valparaiso, Chile months before the information spread throughout the eastern United States. In *Recuerdos*, Rosales describes the meteoric growth of nineteenth century San Francisco and he uses the phrase “las aguas de los mares occidentales” to describe the region in which it is located. Rosales was one of many Independence-era politicians and writers from throughout North and South America who envisioned a geographically and ideologically “western” ocean, which I call the Latin Pacific.¹

From the end of the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century, the ocean off the west coast of the American hemisphere was portrayed as a cohesive region, an ocean of abundant resources and the domain of interconnected traders and travelers. I call this geographic imaginary the Latin Pacific and I argue that the bonanza commerce in this ocean landscape—colonization, whaling, seal hunting, gold mining—inspired an archive of literature and print culture. For writers in the United

¹ The word “west” here used to describe the western coast of America, not the western portion of the Pacific ocean. I argue that “west” is used here as both a geographical orientation to the hemisphere and as an ideological construction of an

States who wrote about this watery region in the primary languages of its ports, English and Spanish, this oceanic frontier was a place of nation-making following independence; this fluid expanse was where American manhood was tested aboard whaling ships and where fortunes were made through the transportation of gold. In keeping, this western “frontier” was described in futurist rhetoric of unrealized wealth and imperial gain. In *The Encantadas*, Herman Melville describes this oceanscape was “a vacant lot” and “a boundless watery Kentucky,” phrases that recall the language and imagery of terrestrial westward expansion. (21, 32)

The Latin Pacific is an imaginary geography composed by and of its interconnected commercial and cultural networks. Notable landfalls in this oceanic region include Alexander Selkirk Island, Mocha Island, Valparaiso, and San Francisco, which exemplify an important, yet forgotten hemispheric and oceanic literary history.² I argue that this once-important region of Pacific cartography has since faded from view because of competing geographical narratives, such as the Asian Pacific and the Atlantic World.³ *Moby Dick* is one example of a text that has been displaced from its Latin Pacific context. Specifically, books about the

² Alexander Selkirk Island, off the coast of Chile, is named after the man who was marooned there, Alexander Selkirk, likely the inspiration for Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. Mocha Island, also off the coast of Chile, is the setting for Jeremiah Reynold’s true account “Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific” (1839), which Herman Melville used as source material for *Moby-Dick*.

³ For more information on these oceanic spaces, please see: *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*, edited by David Armitage and Alison Bashford, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness*, by Paul Gilroy, and *Reimagining the American Pacific: From South Pacific to Bamboo Ridge and Beyond* by Rob Wilson.

hemispheric ocean inspired Moby Dick and the driving force of the text, Ahab's first encounter with the white whale and the loss of his leg, takes place in the Latin Pacific, in a space of "Patagonian sights." (*Moby-Dick*, 8)

This work serves as a preliminary inquiry into a literary archive of a transnational space, and as such it only dips a toe into the ocean of Latin Pacific imaginings.⁴ The limited scope of this archive lends itself to a Latin Pacific cartography that is flat and devoid of local lifeways and indigenous knowledges, and yet I urge that this is the first inroad into a much larger project.

The Latin Pacific, as I use the term here, accounts for the transnational and translational histories and literature of nineteenth-century Pacific port cities. It is my hope that I am also able to represent the Latin Pacific as a space of mutually constituting and commensurable ports and their literatures. I resist the idea that the Latin Pacific represents the "hinterlands," the "contado," of an imperial San Francisco, because at different points throughout history, different ports, including Valdivia, Mocha Island, Lima, Valparaiso, and Panama City, were represented as mercantile and military seats of power. (Brechin xxi, xxxi) Christopher Benfey's "wave theory of cultural exchange [...] a constant oscillation [between nations]," which he uses to describe nineteenth century transculturation between the United States and Japan, is an apt representation of the multidirectional flows of culture and commerce in the Latin Pacific.

⁴ This project started as work towards a PhD dissertation and as a longer project it would have included a larger scope of people, language, history, and times. My research included three weeks of research at the national libraries in Peru and Chile.

Because the Latin Pacific is a transnational space of flux and flow, its time is different than the chronologies ascribed to the nations that border it. Specifically, a Latin Pacific consciousness emerges in the early literature of European exploration and begins to fade in the 1850s. This timeline flies in the face of dominant narratives of the region, such as the 1849 California Gold Rush. My interest ends by the time of “settlement;” instead I am interested in the colonial anticipatory geographies of the region. The literature that I discuss here shares the discourse of “colonial anticipatory geography,” as articulated by J.B. Harley. (“Rereading” 532) By this, Harley means that cartography creates space, “maps are a way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring the human world.” (“Maps” 278) It is only through narrative geography that the Latin Pacific exists. The Latin Pacific wills itself into being through language.

The word “Latin” in the Latin Pacific is intended to call attention to the European construction of the hemisphere and the imperial imagination of America as a united landmass. To read a textual archive through the theoretical framework of the Latin Pacific is to study “Americanity and its interculturalities,” to think the history of the Americas through the hemisphere and the ocean instead of through nations and monolingualisms. (Saldivar xxvi-xxvii) The Latin Pacific is a “geo-social space” that offers a “transnational, anti-national, and outernational” approach to the many storied places and times in its purview. (Saldivar x) For Quijano and Wallerstein, the genesis of “the Americas” as a “geosocial entity” starts in “the long sixteenth century” as a “constitutive act of the modern world system.” (Quijano and Wallerstein 549) For

Saldívar, “Americanity” is “a crucial geo-social space for our times and for the discipline’s turn to hemispheric and trans-American studies. “Americanity” offers area studies an internationalist approach to the cultures of the Américas in the modern world-system.

The Latin Pacific is one of many “new thalassolog[ies]: that is the turn towards the waters of the world, the dwellers on their shores and islands, and the modes of interaction across maritime space.” (Armitage and Bashford 6)

Thalassology, or ocean studies, frees historians from terrestrial constraints and allows for the construction “of accounts of the human past that fully encompass its mobility, hybridity, and interconnectedness across geographies and polities.” (Armitage and Bashford 6) Hester Blum writes, “the sea is geographically central to the hemispheric or transnational turn in American studies and Atlantic and Pacific studies.” (1) Blum elucidates one of the enduring impacts of the blue humanities: “[a]s oceanic studies reveal, freedom from national belonging make possible other ways of understanding affiliation, citizenship, mobility, rights, and sovereignty, all of which have been read in recent critical history as overdetermined by nationalism.” (2) Blum posits that “an oceanic turn might allow us to derive new forms of relatedness,” which are distinct from the methodologies of the nation. (3)

In the first chapter I propose a genealogy of the Latin Pacific imaginary in Western cartography. I see a trajectory of thought about the hemispheric ocean that starts with Francis Fletcher, the on-board Chaplain for Francis Drake, who described Mocha Island, the namesake of the white whale Moby Dick, as a providential place in

a new oceanscape. Next, I discuss William Dampier, the English sea captain who rescued William Selkirk, the likely inspiration for Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. I introduce the history of the hide and tallow trade and the United States' militarization of the Latin Pacific in the beginning of the nineteenth century. I close read works by Richard Henry Dana Jr., Faxon Atherton, and President James Polk, whose writing reflects a mapping of San Francisco in a Latin Pacific geographical context.

In the second chapter, I make the argument for Herman Melville as a Latin Pacific writer. I start with a discussion of *Moby-Dick* and its origins in the "Chilean Sea." I highlight the fact the Ishmael intended to sail around Cape Horn, but was diverted by Ahab's monomaniacal focus on Moby Dick. Ishmael's journey through the Indian Ocean and Asian Pacific, as opposed to the intended Latin Pacific, is a metaphor for the displacement of Melville's writing from the Latin Pacific. A similar fate befalls *Benito Cereno*, which was set off the southern coast of the hemisphere, and yet is often extracted to a revolutionary Caribbean context. I also read *The Encantadas* as a narrative mapping of the Latin Pacific, which Melville calls a "boundless watery Kentucky," a South American ocean frontier. (32)

In a short conclusion, I introduce the writer Gertrude Atherton, the prolific turn of the twentieth century California "local color" writer who helped to popularize the mythology of Spanish California. Gertrude Atherton was the daughter in law of Faxon Atherton and a direct beneficiary of the wealth accumulated in the Latin Pacific, and yet, in Gertrude's writing, there is a conspicuous absence of California's hemispheric history. I suggest that the popularization of the California fantasy

histories, as well as the dominance of ocean paradigms like the Asia Pacific and the Pacific Rim, have obscured the important history of the Latin Pacific. Ultimately, I am reminded that the Latin Pacific is itself a form of forgetting, of the indigenous lifeways and the life force of the ocean.

II. The Latin Pacific Imaginary

People have inhabited the west coast of the hemisphere for tens of thousands of years. The Inca, Mayan, and Aztec empires all stretched to the Pacific coast and used the ocean for natural resources and transportation. These ancient empires were part of a transoceanic network both east-west and north-south. At the end of the fifteenth century, Spain and Portugal signed The Treaty of Tordesillas, which made the Pacific Ocean the “private preserve” of the Spanish. (Coclanis) “As a result, the Spanish received exclusive rights to that half of the globe west of the demarcation line [370 leagues west of Cape Verde Islands],” which meant nearly all of the Americas and whatever lay west. (Coclanis)

It was not until 1513 that the first European, Vasco Núñez de Balboa, in search of gold, sailed into the Pacific via the Isthmus of Panama. Balboa called this vast expanse of water “Mar del Sur, the South Sea—and so it remained in common speech and very generally in maps and academic discourse, for over two centuries.” (Spate 1) Balboa claimed this ocean for Spain and established a settlement, Santa Marie de la Antigua del Darién, on the Pacific coast of the Panama Isthmus, a region that would become an important part of the Latin Pacific imaginary for nineteenth century Latin American revolutionaries and gold seekers alike. Simon Bolivar would go on to describe this place as “el emporio” of the universe in *Carta de Jamaica*.⁵

⁵ In *Carta de Jamaica*, Simon Bolívar prophesies the grand future of “Los Estados del Istmo de Panamá.” The time/space construction of the Istmo de Panama is also present in Bolivar’s “Discurso de Angostura” (1819) and “Convocatoria del Congreso de Panamá” (1824). Bolivar imagines a future that places the Isthmus at the “center”

Only after Magellan crossed his namesake straight did the ocean become known as the Pacific. At this point, the Pacific “was only a vast void [...] a track almost lost in a waste of mystery and darkness.” (Spate 2) Over the next four hundred years, Europe and America changed this “empty” space “into a nexus of economic and military power” through state-sponsored violence and individual aspiration. (Spate 2) Interest in this ocean began to increase and “in 1522 Pascual de Andagoya went down the coast as far as Ecuador” and “in 1532 Francisco Pizarro conquered Peru.” (Coclanis) After this, “a regular trade developed that carried Peruvian silver up the coast to Panama” where it moved east to the Caribbean and Spain. (Coclanis) Spanish settlement also “extended as far south as central Chile. In 1557-8 Juan Fernández Ladrillero explored the islands along the Chilean coast down to the Strait of Magellan.” Melville's *The Encantadas* represents these islands as part of the Latin Pacific.

Spain was not alone in its desire to map, know, and conquer the Pacific; the English, Dutch, and French wanted to establish themselves in the Pacific as well. The English sea captain Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the globe between 1577 and 1580. The narrative of Drake's voyage, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, was published in 1665 and is based on several different accounts. Drake scholar Kenneth R. Andrews argues that South America, specifically the western

of the nation, the hemisphere and the world; a place that connects the Atlantic and the Pacific and is geographically in the middle between Europe and Africa, and Asia. In *Carta de Jamaica*, Bolivar describes the future of the region, “Los Estados del Istmo de Panamá hasta Guatemala formarán quizás una asociación. Esta magnífica posición entre los dos grandes mares podrá ser con el tiempo el *emporio del universo*.” (19)

coast of the hemisphere, “was the area that Drake and his partners were primarily concerned with [...] For about a decade an important group of Englishmen was seriously interested in the commercial and colonial potential of this region, which became for a short while a major focus of English overseas ambition.”⁶ (49) I argue that the Latin Pacific was, in fact, an area of interests for the United States, England, and Europe up through the 1850s.

Andrews argues that English interest in the western coast of the hemisphere “was no mere flash in the pan,” instead, “it embodied serious ambition which persisted for a decade, from the early [sixteen] seventies to the early [sixteen] eighties,” and as I argue here, had a sustained impact on the Pacific imaginary of Europeans. (52) Just as we find in the early and mid-nineteenth century, “these ambitions were commercial and colonial as well as predatory, and they were comparable in importance to English ambition in North America.” (Andrews 52) Andrews makes that point that, “[i]f this idea sounds strange, it is because our minds have been influenced by subsequent events. At the time, however, the English had almost no experience of any part of America, and they formed their impression of this land of opportunity chiefly from reports of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies there.

⁶ Andrews argues that Drake drew on the work that Richard Grenville, a sixteenth century British explorer, who was specifically interested in the Pacific coast of South America. “Grenville had earlier proposed to the government a southern project—“A discovery of lands beyond the equinoctial”—with his specific target the most southerly triangle of the South American continent, not yet occupied by Christians. This project has nothing whatever to do with the northern hemisphere. It was only when Grenville, under pressure, was forced to give up his venture that he belatedly came out with a new argument in favor of the southern voyage: it would provide a better approach to the Northwest Passage [...]” (*Sir Francis Drake and the Famous Voyage*, 50)

It was the success and wealth of these holdings, which more than anything else, inspired English interest in the New World.” (52)

Drake left England with five ships, but only one ship, the Golden Hind, made it successfully into and through the Pacific. The first stop that Drake made in the Spanish-controlled waters of the Pacific was Mocha Island, the namesake of Moby Dick, located 34 km off the coast of Southern Chile. On the first day that the Golden Hind lay anchor there, indigenous people on the island, who are said to have fled “the maine” because of the Spanish, greeted them with a “shew of great courtesie.” (Dampier 238) These people brought Drake and his men “potatoes, rootes, and two very fat sheepe, which our Generall received and gave them other things for them.” (Dampier 238) The next day, when two men went ashore to collect water, “the people taking them for Spaniards (to whom they used to shew no favour if they taken them) layde violent hands on them, and as we think, slew them.” (Dampier 238) The ships soon departed.

Mocha Island was an early place through which the Latin Pacific was imagined. The Chaplain aboard the Golden Hind, Francis Fletcher, described Mocha Island as a “most golden province of Valdivia.” (Quinn 54) He described the island as “most rich in gold and silver, and it aboundeth in many good things necessary for the maintenance of God’s people.” (Quinn 54) Even in these early days of colonization, the Pacific was imagined as a providential place.

William Dampier was a British explorer who rescued Alexander Selkirk, the sailor who may have been the inspiration for Daniel Dafoe’s Robinson Crusoe.

Dampier published *A New Voyage Around the World in 1697*, which is said to be the “first English best-selling” travel writing. (princeton.edu) Like Drake before him, Dampier sailed along the west coast of the hemisphere and out to the Galapagos. While there he made scientific and cultural observations and plundered Spanish ships. In *A New Voyage*, Dampier gives “a general relation of most of the towns of note on this coast from Valdivia to Panama, and from thence towards California.” (160) He describes Valdivia as an emporium,

This is a flourishing city by reason it is a thoroughfare for all imported or exported good and treasure, to and fro all parts of Peru and Chile; whereof their store-houses are never empty. The road also is seldom or never without ships. Besides, once in three years, when the Spanish armada comes to Portobello, then the Plate fleet also from Lima comes hither with the King’s treasure, and abundance of merchant-ships full of goods and Plate; at that time the city is full of merchants and gentlemen; the seamen are busy in landing the treasure and goods, and the carriers, or caravan masters, employed in carrying it overland on mules (in vast droves every day) to Portobello, and bringing back European goods from thence: though the city be then so full yet during this heat of business there is no hiring of an ordinary slave under a piece-of-eight a day; houses, also chambers, beds and victuals, are then extraordinary dear. (Dampier 160)

Dampier describes the coast as a “road” and Valdivia as an emporium, characterized by an abundance of ships, merchants, seamen, and the “heat” of business. This sense of the coast as a “road” would continue into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Between 1768 and 1779, Captain James Cook traveled through the Pacific on three separate journeys. On his third trip, he explored and mapped the west coast of North America. In 1783, “John Ledyard’s unauthorized account of Cook’s voyage to the Northwest Coast help[ed] to bring American merchants into the trans-Pacific fur

trade,” which operated between North America and China. (Bockstoke 364) Reports led to a burgeoning trade in the region.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, merchants from the United States and Europe were circling the Pacific in search of fur. At the same time, the English had set their sights on the Pacific, an “El Dorado of the whale-fishery.” (Beale 74) In *Moby-Dick*, Herman Melville tells the story of the whale-ship Amelia, which in 1788 was the first whaling ship to depart the Atlantic world and find success in the Pacific. The English were soon by the United States in the Latin Pacific whale fishery, a booming enterprise that led to settlement by Europeans and Northeasterners throughout the region.

One indication of the United States’ growing attachment to this region was the militarization of the ocean. In 1821, the United States Navy established the Pacific Squadron, a fleet of nine ships intended to protect the nation’s whaling industry and imperial projects along] the west coast of America. Ships were stationed “off the coasts of Chile, Panama, Mexico, California, and the Pacific Northwest, and two among the Hawaiian Islands.” (Smith 101) The warships “cruised up and down the South American coast from Valparaiso, Chile to the Isthmus of Panama,” with “occasional runs out to Hawaii.” (Symonds and Clipson 64) The Pacific Squadron played a significant role in the Mexican-American War and the conflicts that led up to it. In 1842, the commander of the squadron, Thomas Ap Catesby Jones, claimed the city of Monterey, California for the United States after receiving false information about imminent war with Mexico. A couple years later, the Pacific fleet played an

important role in the Mexican-American war. When California became a United States territory, San Francisco became the seat of power for the “North Pacific Squadron,” while the “South Pacific Squadron” stationed at Panama. (Symonds and Clipson 64) To describe the fleet south of Panama as “South Pacific” is interesting. Herman Melville, Amasa Delano, Thomas Beale, and many others that I encountered in my research describe the ocean and islands off South America as the “South Pacific,” which is normally only applied to Australia and Oceania today. In this thesis I hope to resurrect the Latin Pacific and expose some of the ways that this oceanscape disappeared from the Pacific narrative.

It was also in 1821 that Mexico gained independence, which led to the deregulation of commerce and the beginning of the international hide and tallow trade. Although the Spanish missionaries had raised cattle for over a hundred years beforehand, it was not until the industry was unmoored from the empire that individual enterprise could begin. That same year, the Boston trading firm Bryant & Sturgis “established a permanent agent in the territory to begin the systematic collection of hides for the New England market.” (“Longhorns”) Within a year, nine other “Hide and Tallow companies had opened office in California, and business began to flourish.” (“Longhorns”) The cattle hides were used to make leather boots and shoes, which provided the United States “with a product with which they could begin to conduct international trade with European nations.” (“Longhorns”)

Bryant & Sturgis employed two authors of mid-nineteenth century California literature: Richard Henry Dana Jr and the lesser known Faxon Atherton. Between

1818 and 1825, Bryant & Sturgis sailed “from Boston and other nearby ports headed around Cape Horn to the Northwest Coast to trade with the local Indian tribes for sea otter pelts, which were then carried on to Canton to trade for Chinese tea, silks, and porcelain.” (Malloy) By 1830, after the collapse of the sea otter population, Bryant & Sturgis switched their focus to the hide trade with Mexican California.

The hide and tallow trade catalyzed the United States’ interest in California. In 1840, the Boston Courier published a letter about the future of California. The letter is from a New York agent of the Boston-based hide trading firm Bryant, Sturgis & Co., which operated between California and Boston via Cape Horn. The letter urges readers to support US colonization in California, specifically, to “take the subject” of the “purchase by our government of the territory of California” into “serious consideration.” (qtd. in *Salt River Journal* 3)⁷ The author cites many reasons

⁷ Full text of Boston Courier article, published in the *Salt River Journal*, April 11, 1840: “The merchants of Boston are well aware of the importance and extent of the trade carrier on with California now—so are the merchants of New York, and both cities know very well, that if the ownership was vested in the United States, and an opportunity given to Yankees to emigrate to the peninsula, and settle there, that trade which is now so important [...] it would be a serious and fatal error in this Government to permit either England or France to get the advance of her movements, so as to hold the refusal of that territory at their pleasure—that affording the safest harborage on the Pacific, we should not be unmindful of the prospect when settlers shall go beyond the Rocky Mountains to found another Western Empire... Let Bryant, Sturgis & Co. *here* move in the matter, by heading a call for a public meeting of citizens to petition Congress to take the subject into speedy consideration... This is one of the few, and his view must, on reflection, be apparent. The East has a deep and vital interest in this question—along the entire Atlantic line of coast, from Portland to New Orleans—their interest points them to adopt this policy. The West’s interest is even greater—for their political and commercial greatness must eventually be supreme; this can do the East no injury, for whenever commerce becomes the first interest of the West, as in the course of the present century it is destined to become,

why annexation is important, including the future “political and commercial greatness” of the region, and the “serious and fatal error” it would be to let the region go to the French and English. (qtd. in Salt River Journal 3) Demonstrated by the letter to the Boston Courier, the United State’s motivation for colonization in California was not only the ample business opportunity, but also the fear that England or France might beat them to it.

The hide and tallow trade depended on the six month long, 17,000 mile route around Cape Horn via the Strait of Magellan or the Drake Passage. At this time there was also the possibility of travel through the Isthmus of Panama, but the waterway could not support the heavy cargo that traveled between the Pacific and Atlantic worlds. Nonetheless, the route around the horn was very treacherous because of fierce weather and ice.

Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815-1882) was an educated young man from the east coast who signed onto Pacific sailing voyages during the 1830s and early 1840s. Dana enlisted as a merchant seaman on the *Pilgrim*, owned by Bryant & Sturgis, bound for Alta California in 1834. Dana kept a diary of his voyage, which he published as *Two Years Before the Mast* in 1840.

We sailed down this magnificent bay with a light wind, the tide, which was running out, carrying us at the rate of four or five knots. It was a fine day; the first of entire sunshine we had had for more than a month. We passed directly under the high cliff on which the presidio is built, and stood into the middle of the bay, from whence we could see small bays making up into the interior, large and beautifully wooded islands,

the East will be regarded by Western Representatives with more benevolent eye, and commercial interests be more regarded than they have for twelve years past.” (3)

and the mouths of several small rivers. If California ever becomes a prosperous country, this bay will be the centre of its prosperity. The abundance of wood and water; the extreme fertility of its shores; the excellence of its climate, which is as near to being perfect as any in the world; and its facilities for navigation, affording the best anchoring-grounds in the whole western coast of America,— all fit it for a place of great importance. (179)

Dana projects a great future for the city by the bay, which he describes as the “best anchoring-grounds in the whole western coast of America, —all fit for a place of great importance.” (179) In this passage, San Francisco’s hemispheric geography is the “whole western coast of America,” which makes sense in context of his passage on a hide and tallow ship that depended on Latin Pacific roots and routes. (179)

Like Richard Henry Dana Jr., Faxon Atherton was an educated man from Massachusetts, who left home on a ship bound for the Pacific. Atherton began his career in the hide and tallow in 1830 when he began working for Bryant & Sturgis in Boston. In 1834, he decided to move to Valparaiso, where he started his own shipping business with a supply chain along the western coast of the American hemisphere. When the gold rush began, it was Atherton’s fleet of ships already in the Pacific and his knowledge of the ocean that gave him a significant leg up on the competition that brought goods and people to the gold fields.

Even more than Dana, perhaps, Atherton understood California’s past, present, and future in a hemispheric comparative context. I suggest that this is because of his experience in the hide and tallow business and because he learned about California from “firsthand reports he obtained from seamen who visited Valparaiso.” (Atherton xviii) Throughout his writings, compiled in *The California*

Diary of Faxon Dean Atherton, 1836-1839, edited by Doyce B. Nunis, Atherton makes several comparisons between California and Chile. He writes in an uncompleted letter, penned in Tahiti in 1839, “I have hopes the U.S. will acquire California by purchase or otherwise, as it is the most beautiful country very similar to Chile.” (Atherton xix)

Demonstrated by his letters and journal entries, Faxon Atherton helped originate the tradition of San Francisco booster literature. While Atherton’s writing uses the tropes of gold rush literature—freedom, meritocracy, rugged wilderness—it is notable that his point of comparison for San Francisco is Valparaiso, Chile, a city that has historically been referred to as “Little San Francisco” because of similar climates, city climbs, and chronologies of colonization and independence. Atherton writes,

I know that I have suffered more in California than I ever did in my life before, travelling day after day, crossing mountains under a burning sun, swimming rivers, sleeping night after night in the open air...half froze and actually starved, expecting each moment to be bit by a rattlesnake, scalped by an Indian, used up by a panther or grizzly bear, at others landing or going off through tremendous surf, frequently capsized and half drowned, out night and day in an open boat in the Bay of San Francisco with the wind blowing a gale. This is a slight picture of the last three years of my life. Perhaps a little highly coloured, yet substantially true. Still it is pleasanter than a life in Valpa[raiso]. There [in California] a person feels more free, more independent, more of that sort of self-confident feeling caused by the frequent call for the exercise of natural abilities than where he has but one particular duty to attend to and all his wants, artificial and real, supplied by those who are paid for. There, often times, no money will procure you the most common necessaries of life. (Atherton xx)

In this journal entry, Atherton uses the genre of gold rush literature and its attendant

tropes to describe an experience that is for him grounded in a hemispheric history of San Francisco.⁸ He does not compare San Francisco to his hometown of Boston, once the outpost of western freedom and liberty, but to Valparaiso. He understands California through Chile, a point of comparison that demonstrates the hemispheric history of the city.

The San Francisco-Valparaiso comparison emerges in many texts written by people who plied the waters of the Latin Pacific. Vicente Perez Rosales, a canonical Chilean writer of the nineteenth century who traveled to California in 1848 and recorded his experiences in *Diario del Viaje a California, 1848-1849*, describes an almost identical trajectory of growth for San Francisco and Valparaiso in the first chapter of his book, *Recuerdos del Pasado, 1814-1860*.⁹

Con decir que los zapatos se mandaban hacer a Santiago, basta para dejar sentado que, despues de San Francisco de California, con iguales recursos, ningun pueblo de los conocidos ha aventajado a Valparaiso, ni en la rapidez de su crecimiento ni en su importancia relative, sobre las aguas de los mares occidentales. (*Recuerdos del Pasado* 2)

When we recall that even shoes had to be ordered from the shoemakers in Santiago, we have all the proof we need that, next to San Francisco in California, which had similar resources, no town in the known world has surpassed Valparaiso in the rapidity of its growth or in its relative importance on the waters of the western seas. (*Times Gone By* 24)

Here, Vicente Perez Rosales echoes both Dana and Atherton's hemispheric geography, called here "las aguas de los mares occidentales," or "the waters of the

⁸ For more information on the "tropes" of California literature, please see: *California: A History* by Kevin Starr, *Imperial San Francisco*, by Gray Brechin, and *Something in the Soil* by Patricia Nelson Limerick.

⁹ In my discussion of *Recuerdos del Pasado, 1814-1860*, I cite both the original Spanish version and John H. R. Polt's translation *Times Gone By*.

western seas.” In his comparison between San Francisco and Valparaiso, he maps a region of commensurable cities with similar pasts, presents, and futures. Perez Rosales provides several Latin Pacific cartographies in *Recuerdos*. Echoing William Dampier who, at the turn of the eighteenth century, prophesied a great future for Valdivia, Perez Rosales describes the port city of Valdivia as “uno de los puertos mas seguros I cómodos del Pacifico,” or “one of the most secure and accessible harbors on the Pacific coast.” (*Recuerdos del Pasado* 320, *Times Gone By* 301) Again, this Pacific has a North-South, Latin orientation.

When the California gold rush began, the shipping networks in the Latin Pacific facilitated the movement of people, goods, and information from the Atlantic world and the South Pacific to San Francisco. President James Polk understood the significance of San Francisco’s proximity to well-established shipping routes. In his Fourth Annual Message, delivered on December 5, 1848, Polk describes California in hemispheric and oceanic context.

Upper California, irrespective of the vast mineral wealth recently discovered there, holds at this day, in point of value and importance to the rest of the Union, the same relation that Louisiana did when the fine territory was acquired from France forty-five years ago. Extending nearly ten degrees of latitude along the Pacific, and embracing the only safe and commodious harbors on that coast for many hundred miles, with a temperate climate and an extensive interior of fertile lands, it is scarcely possible to estimate its wealth until it shall be brought under the government of our laws, and its resources fully developed. From its position, it must command the rich commerce of China, of Asia, of the islands of the Pacific, of western Mexico, of Central America, the South American States, and of the Russian possessions bordering on that ocean. A great emporium will doubtless speedily arise on the Californian coast, which may be destined to rival in importance New Orleans itself. The depot of the vast commerce which must exist in the Pacific will probably be at some point on the bay of San Francisco,

and will occupy the same relation to the whole western coast of that ocean as New Orleans does to the Valley of the Mississippi and the gulf of Mexico. To this depot our numerous whale ships will resort with their cargoes, to trade, refit, and obtain supplies. This of itself will largely contribute to built up a city, which would soon become the centre of a great and rapidly increasing commerce. [...]

Polk begins by saying that “Upper California,” or Alta California, so named by the Spanish, is valuable regardless of “the vast mineral wealth recently discovered there.” Polk then makes an analogy between Louisiana and California, in which both states are both represented as recently won western borderlands that are folded into the fabric of the United States. Polk hypothesizes that an “emporium,” a “depot of vast commerce” will arise “at some point on the bay of San Francisco” through its “command [of] the rich commerce of China, of Asia, of the islands of the Pacific, of western Mexico, of Central America, the South American States, and of the Russian possessions.” From this, “emporium,” a “depot of vast commerce” will arise “at some point on the bay of San Francisco.” The president furthers the comparison between California and Louisiana by analogizing the position of the San Francisco bay on “the whole western coast of that ocean” to New Orleans' seat of commercial and military power in “the Valley of the Mississippi and the gulf of Mexico.” Polk hypothesizes that an “emporium,” a “depot of vast commerce” will arise “at some point on the bay of San Francisco.” Polk also refers to the whaling industry, which first led the United States into the Latin Pacific.

Newspapers in the Latin Pacific represented the hemispheric ocean as a cohesive region. Starting in the 1820s, print media connected disparate peoples along

the west coast of the Americas. Newspapers were exchanged at port cities and articles were often translated to be included in other periodicals. Some of the first newspapers in the Latin Pacific were *El Peruano*, founded in 1825 by the revolutionary Simon Bolivar and *El Mercurio de Valparaiso*, founded in 1827.

In a March 9, 1850 article titled “Newspapers in the Pacific,” the *Daily Alta California*, published in San Francisco, celebrated the “Press in the Pacific,” and its “early growth and more recent advancement.” The “Press in the Pacific” is comprised of periodicals from “this coast” and its ocean, which includes the “*Sandwich Island Gazette*,” “*The Polynesian*,” “*The Oregon Spectator*,” “*The Neighbour*,” an English newspaper published in Valparaiso, and “*The Panama Star*.” Just the names of these papers demonstrate the multinational connections between ports throughout the Latin Pacific.

In addition to Valparaiso’ English language newspaper *The Neighbour*, the port city had a bilingual newspaper, *El Mercurio de Valparaiso*, which began printing in 1827 and as *El Mercurio* continues to be the longest running Spanish language newspaper in the world. The printing press used for *El Mercurio de Valparaiso* is part of a transnational American history: the paper used type “purchased from the heirs of Benjamin Franklin, and the top of the front page of early copies displayed the American eagle and the seal of the United States” and Thomas Wells, one of the first editors and typesetters, was from the United States. (Monaghan 35) *El Mercurio de Valparaiso* was first printed in a store owned by Alsop, Wetmore y Cryder. (Monaghan 35) Joseph Alsop was the uncle of Richard Alsop IV, who was a

founding member of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, which in 1847 secured rights to transport mail from New York to California via the Isthmus of Panama.

(McKay 278) When the gold rush began, the company's steamships became a major transporter of people and goods between the Atlantic and Pacific. (McKay 278) Many famous writers would go on to work for *El Mercurio de Valparaiso*, including José Victorino Lastarria, Domingo Fausto Sarmiento, members of the literary movement Movimiento de 1842, and Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna who travelled through gold rush California during his exile in the United States.

California's newspapers drew heavily on information from *El Mercurio*, as it was most often in Valparaiso that news from the Atlantic world first touched the Pacific shores. The *Alta California* saw the importance of its location as part of the Latin Pacific trade and information route. In the January 25, 1849 edition, a news article appears that describes the spread of excitement about California gold along "the whole western coast of South America."

By the arrival of the clipper ship Ann McKim, 51 days from Valparaiso and 29 from Guayaquil, we have received a copy of *El Mercurio*, of November 30, 1848. There is no news of importance, if we accept the fact the great excitement exists along the whole western coast of South America in relation to the California gold mines. Great numbers of people are preparing to move here, and vessels yet to arrive from the United States are advertised to take passengers. (January 25, 1849)

There are several instances in the *Daily Alta California* of excerpts from other newspapers, such as the Spanish language *El Mercurio* from Valparaiso, Chile. These articles are generally prefaced with the phrase "translated from *El Mercurio*."

The traffic around Cape Horn began to dwindle in the 1850s, and it was at this time that both the Latin Pacific and San Francisco's place in it began to fade from view, as it so remains. The reasons for this shift include the end of the gold rush in 1855 and the improvement of transcontinental transportation, which significantly decreased ship traffic along the coast of the continent. The absence of the Latin Pacific in the historical writing of famous California authors such as Gertrude Atherton and Hubert Howe Bancroft ensured the erasure of this region from California studies. Instead of acknowledging the transnational origins of California, Bancroft and Atherton both relied on the narrative of a forever-past Spanish California and an image of an Anglo-American gold rush, which occluded the hemispheric currents that brought goods, peoples, and ideas to the port of San Francisco.

III. Herman Melville as Latin Pacific Author

In *Moby-Dick*, the Pequod's failure to reach the oft-cited Cape Horn is a potent metaphor for the erasure of the Latin Pacific imaginary from hemispheric and ocean studies. Throughout the novel, the Cape and the "western sea" are constantly referred to. Ishmael starts the book with the intention to go to Cape Horn, the first lines of the second chapter are: "I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific." (*Moby-Dick* 9) Because Moby Dick is rumored to have been in the Asia Pacific, the Pequod ends up traveling around the Cape of Good Hope into the Pacific. Although Ishmael never makes it to the Latin Pacific, this region continues to be a point of reference throughout the novel as it was the original place where Ahab met the white whale and lost his leg. This region of "Patagonian sights" is the setting for *Benito Cereno* and *The Encantadas*, and it is for this reason that Melville must be considered an author of the Latin Pacific and the hemispheric west. (*Moby-Dick* 8)

At the end of the eighteenth century, the hemispheric ocean was the new frontier for Western merchants, who began to hunt whale, trap fur, and trade hide and tallow in the region. This emergent marketplace began to attract money and military might from England and the United States, demonstrated by the number of English speakers in Valparaiso, Chile, a hub for Latin Pacific industry, and by the establishment of U.S. Navy's Pacific Squadron. These new hunting grounds were located in the oceanscape between the hemispheric coast and "the Encantadas," which

includes Juan Fernandez Island and the Galapagos. Whale hunting by Westerners did not start in the Asia Pacific until the 1820s.

Deep-ocean whaling in the colonies began in 1712 off the coast of Nantucket. (pbs.org) Following the American Revolution, England was “anxious to subsidize its own whaling industry,” and so in the 1780s they began to develop a whaling fleet to rival the United States. (pbs.org) The late 1780s was a time that Thomas Beale, author of *Whale-Fishing—The Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (1839), describes as “the period when the great El Dorado of the whale-fishery in the two Pacific was opened up.” (320) Melville relied heavily on Beale’s text when writing *Moby-Dick*. (melvillemarginalia.org) Melville uses Beale’s account to tell the history of the whaling industry in the Pacific in *Moby-Dick*,

In 1778, a fine ship, the *Amelia*, fitted out for the express purpose, and at the sole charge of the vigorous Enderbys, boldly rounded Cape Horn, and was the first among the nations to lower a whale-boat of any sort in the great South Sea. The voyage was a skillful and lucky one; and returning to her berth with her hold full of the precious sperm, the *Amelia*’s example was soon followed by other ships, English and American, and thus the vast Sperm Whale grounds of the Pacific were thrown open. [...] In 1819, the same house fitted out a discovery whale ship of their own, to go on a tasting cruise to the remote waters of Japan. That ship—well called the ‘*Syren*’—made a noble experimental cruise; and it was thus that the great Japanese Whaling Ground first became generally known. The *Dick Syren* in this famous voyage was commanded by a Captain Coffin, a Nantucketer. (483)

Melville describes the ocean off of Cape Horn as the “South Sea,” a cartography that the Latin Pacific has been written out of.¹⁰ Amasa Delano, the inspiration for

¹⁰ The absence of Latin Pacific imaginary, or any similar permutation, remains in Sean Brawley and Chris Dixon’s 2015 book, *The South Seas: A Reception History from Daniel Defoe to Dorothy Lamour*.

Melville's *Benito Cereno*, also described this region as the "South Pacific." It is possible that one reason for the disappearance of the Latin Pacific from contemporary studies is the potentially false conflation of the South Seas with Oceania.

Despite a difference in dates—the *Amelia* departed in 1788, not 1778, although Britain did set its eyes on Pacific whaling around 1778—Ishmael's account of this ship shows much fidelity to Beale's account. Melville also relied on Owen Chase's *A Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-ship Essex* (1821) and Jeremiah Reynold's "Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific" (1839). Melville also read Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s *Two Years Before the Mast*. Herschel Park, a Herman Melville scholar, suggests that "Dana's new book, and very possibly the story of Mocha Dick," worked to confirm him in his resolution not only to go to sea but to go to the Pacific." (Parker 181-2) Undoubtedly, Melville had an orientation toward the Latin Pacific.

Mocha Island, off the coast from Valdivia, maintained a place in the west's Latin Pacific imaginary for centuries. Most famously, Mocha Island is the setting for Jeremiah Reynold's *Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific*, which was first published in *The Knickerbocker* in 1839. Edgar Allen Poe was also familiar with Reynolds and he used Mocha Dick as part of his source material for *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Reynolds gives a history of Mocha Dick and locates him near Mocha Island and Cape Horn.

From the period of Dick's first appearance, his celebrity continued to increase, until his name seemed naturally to mingle with the salutations which whalers were in the habit of exchanging, in their encounter upon the broad Pacific; the customary interrogations almost

always closing with, ‘Any new from Mocha Dick?’ Indeed, nearly every whaling captain who rounded Cape Horn, if he possessed any professional ambition, or value himself on his skill in subduing the monarch of the seas, would lay his vessel along the coast, in hope of having an opportunity to try the muscle of this doughty champion who was never known to shun his assailants. (Reynolds 13)

The nineteenth century Latin Pacific imaginary informs the setting of *Mocha Dick*, and yet both Melville and Poe displace the drama in their novels to the Indian Ocean and the southwestern Pacific. It is this erasure of the Latin Pacific that has shaped current Pacific imaginaries. In *Mocha Dick*, Reynolds exclaims, “could we comprehend, at a glance, the mighty surface of the Indian or Pacific seas, what a picture would open upon us of unparalleled industry and daring enterprise!” (35) What is most interesting here is the sense of this ocean as a place of “unparalleled industry and daring enterprise,” a place of nation-making through tests of strength and manhood. (Reynolds 35)

In 1836, Reynolds wrote an address to the Hall of Representatives titled “Address on the subject of a Surveying and Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Ocean and the South Seas,” which was amended with critical notes by Edgar Allen Poe and published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in January 1837. Poe agreed that the “immense region” off the western coast of the hemisphere was a place of commercial value. Poe also saw the militaristic value of a presence in this region.

Reynolds wrote of the “immense region” of the Latin Pacific:

Again, if the object of the expedition were simply to attain a high southern latitude, then two small brigs or barks would be quite sufficient. If to visit a few points among the islands, a sloop of war might answer the purpose. But are these the objects? We apprehend they only form a part. From the west coast of South America, running

down the longitude among the islands on both sides of the equator, though more especially south, to the very shores of Asia, is the field that lies open before us, independent of the higher latitudes south, of which we shall speak in the conclusion of our remarks. Reflecting on the picture we have sketched of our interests in that immense region, all must admit, that the armament of the expedition should be sufficient to protect our flag; to succor the unfortunate of every nation, who may be found on desolate islands, or among hordes of savages; a power that would be sufficient by the majesty of its appearance, to awe into respect and obedience the fierce and turbulent, and to give facilities to all engaged in the great purposes of the voyage.

Reynolds describes the oceanic region of the “west coast of South America” on “both sides of the equator,” including the islands, as an “immense” as a cohesive region that is in the interest of the United States to obtain.

Not only is it in the economic interest of the United States to venture into this reason, but also Reynolds sees this region as a place of nation making. He writes in his “Address,” “our seamen are hardy and adventurous, especially those who are engaged in the seal trade and whale fisheries [...] Indeed, the enterprize, courage, and perseverance of American seamen are, if not unrivaled, at least unsurpassed.” The rugged individualism that is so often associated with the terrestrial western frontier is found in the ocean in “the seal trade and whale fisheries.” This is a place of “enterprize, courage, and perseverance.”

The history of U.S. nation making in the Latin Pacific is no better represented than in Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*. At the beginning of the novel, Ishmael has his sights set on Cape Horn and the waters off of Chile as his destination. In the first lines of the second chapter he says, “I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific.” (9) *Moby Dick* is also

referred to as “O Don Miguel! thou Chilian whale, marked like an old tortoise with mystic hieroglyphics upon the back!” (223) Here, Melville describes Moby Dick as a Chilean whale. Melville also provides descriptions of Moby Dick that place him in the ocean off of Chile, specifically. he is located at “a distance off Cape Horn.” (268) Ishmael says that it is “a thousand Patagonian sights and Moby Dick sounds” that “sway[s]” his decision to go to sea. (31) Moreover, the driving drama of *Moby-Dick* originates in the Latin Pacific, for it is off of Cape Horn that Ahab loses his leg, “that thing that happened to him off Cape Horn, long ago, when he lay like dead for three day and nights.” (101) Not only does Ahab encounter violence from the whale, but also he is also in a “skrimmage with the Spaniard afore the altar in Santa,” a reference that is never explained, but is possibly connected to the scene off the island of Santa Mario in *Benito Cereno*. (101) Nevertheless, it again draws our attention to the Latinness of Melville’s Pacific.

Melville does conceive of a Latin Pacific region, connected by a shared history of Spanish colonialism and subsequent revolutionary thought. Melville recounts the process of Peru, Chile, and Bolivia’s revolutions and how they opened up trade along the coast, he even suggests that the whaling industry around Cape Horn help to facilitate the overthrow of the Spanish crown. It is certainly true that the English and Americans were settled in Chile at the time of the revolution and they helped to fortify Chile against the Spanish.

Until the whale fishery rounded Cape Horn, no commerce but colonial, scarcely any intercourse but colonial, was carried on between Europe and the long line of the opulent Spanish provinces on the Pacific coast. It was the whaleman who first broke through the jealous policy of the

Spanish crown, touching those colonies; and, if space permitted, it might be distinctly shown how from those whalers at last eventuated the liberation of Peru, Chili, and Bolivia from the yoke of Old Spain, and the establishment of the eternal democracy in those parts. (215)

Melville traces a connection between the liberation of “Spanish provinces on the Pacific coast” and the whaling industry, which suggests a history of hemispheric revolutionary thought.

The reason that Ishmael does not sail around Cape Horn is that Moby Dick is rumored to be in the Indian Ocean. In order to find him, the Pequod embarks “premature[ly]” to engage “in a miscellaneous hunt” instead of waiting on shore for the next hunting season to begin.

[...] Now, the Pequod had sailed from Nantucket at the very beginning of the Season-on-the-Line. No possible endeavor then could enable her commander to make the great passage southwards, double Cape Horn, and then running down sixty degrees of latitude arrive in the Moby Dick equatorial Pacific in time to cruise there. Therefore, he must wait for the next ensuing season. Yet Ahab had perhaps, correctly selected the premature hour of the Pequod’s sailing, with a view to this very complexion of things. Because, an interval of three hundred and sixty-five days and nights was before him; an interval which, instead of impatiently enduring ashore, he would spend in a miscellaneous hunt; if by chance the White Whale, spending his vacation in seas far remote from his periodical feeding-grounds, should turn up his wrinkled brow off the Persian Gulf, or in the Bengal Bay, or China Seas, or in any other waters haunted by his race. So that Monsoons, Pampas, Nor[’]-Westers, Harmattans, Trades; any wind but the Levanter and Simoon, might blow Moby Dick into the devious zig-zag world-circle of the Pequod’s circumnavigating wake. (218)

This passage explains why the action of Moby Dick takes place off the coast of Asia and thus why it is often associated with this region. However, this decision is described in the language of detour, “vacation,” and “zig-zaging.” Although Ishmael

intended to sail around Cape Horn and into the Latin Pacific, the mad Ahab diverts his trip. This diversion from the Latin Pacific to the Asian Pacific is an apt metaphor for the disappearance of the Latin Pacific from contemporary Pacific studies.

When ships made it around the southern tip of the hemisphere, the first possible stops for water and supplies were Chilean ports. These included two central nodes of the Latin Pacific: the Juan Fernandez Islands and Valparaiso. Melville himself observed the Juan Fernandez Islands onboard the ship *United States* in 1843, and possibly earlier in 1841 aboard the *Acushnet*. The islands were discovered in the sixteenth century by the Spanish and over the next three hundred years were used as a pirate hideout, a hunting ground for seals, an important pit stop for water and food for transoceanic voyages, and a penal colony in the nineteenth century. These islands also hold literary significance. It was on one of these islands, “*Más a Tierra*,” later renamed Robinson Crusoe Island, that the castaway Alexander Selkirk, widely believed to be the basis for Daniel Defoe’s character, lived for four years from 1704-1709. The Juan Fernandez Islands are also the place where Amasa Delano boarded the *Tyral*, a scene that would later be transformed into Melville’s *Benito Cereno*.

Herman Melville’s novella *Benito Cereno* (1855) draws heavily from Amasa Delano’s *Narrative of Voyages and Travels in Northern and Southern Hemispheres, Comprising Three Voyages Round the World. Narrative* was published 1817 and in it Delano chronicles his many fascinating experiences in the Pacific at the turn of the nineteenth century. Chapter eighteen, “Particulars of the Capture of the Spanish ship *Tyral*,” tells of the strange events that unfolded as Delano’s ship *Perseverance*

anchored on the coast of Santa Maria, one of the Juan Fernandez Islands. Greg Grandin describes the Santa Maria as a quasi-emporio in the Latin Pacific, a place of communication and exchange along the western coast of the hemisphere.

Amasa Delano's *Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres*, of which his experience on the *Tyral* is only one chapter, provides insight into the Latin Pacific imaginary at the turn of the nineteenth century. Delano views the South American west coast as distinct from the North American west coast. He writes, "my brother and myself built a small ship [...] with the plan that I should take a voyage in her to the Pacific Ocean. She was launched and fitted; the company for the voyage was formed; and she was manned and armed for the South Pacific, and for the north west coast of America." (253) This conception of the South Pacific certainly includes Latin America, as throughout the text he refers to the Chilean coast and the Latin American coast as the "Southern Pacific Ocean." This geography contradicts the contemporary conception of the South Pacific as the region around Australia and the many islands off the coast of East Asia.

Although Delano's conception of a Latin Pacific region is limited to Latin America, he does participate in the same rhetoric of futurity and the emporium that would characterize this region in the next thirty years. He writes of Lima,

It is a great place of trade, and has a number of ships passing to and from the bay of Guayaquil, Gulf of Panama and Spain, besides the great number already spoken of between the coast of Chili and this place. [...] The city was founded by Pizarro the Spanish general who conquered Peru in 1534, and is by far the greatest mart in the Pacific Ocean on the American side, for all the merchandise of China and the East Indies, as well as Europe, and for the slave trade, as many of the inhabitants of Africa are imported and sold there. (Delano 507)

Delano is an interesting character for the “new thalassology.” Specifically, he makes a comparison between Lima and Bombay as two “great mart[s]” because of their location on bustling bodies of water. (212, 507) He describes Bombay as the great mart of the western coast of India. All the commerce of the Red Sea, the gulf of Persia, the coast of Arabia, Surat, and the coast of Malabar, centre in it.” (212) Delano understands the importance of Lima as a *center of oceans*, not lands.

Melville’s *Benito Cereno* takes place in the Latin Pacific, just as Delano’s *Narrative* does. The novel begins with a vision of the Chilean coast: “[t]he morning was one peculiar to that coast. Everything was mute and calm; everything grey. The sea, though undulated into long roods of swells, seemed fixed, and was sleeked at the surface like waved lead that has cooled and set in the smelter’s mould.” (*Benito Cereno* 1) This space is then expanded to include “the sort of stories, at that day, associated with those seas.” (*Benito Cereno* 1) In these descriptions, the southern portion of the Latin Pacific is unified by shared ocean landscape imagery and by a genealogy of stories. Melville connects this coast of Chile to the whole western coast of South America, when he describes “Baldivia,” or Valdivia, as “the southernmost civilized port of Chili and South America.” (*Benito Cereno* 12)

Herman Melville’s *The Encantadas* is comprised of a series of ten sketches, which portray a unified West coast of the hemisphere. The text was first published in *Putnam’s Monthly*, starting in 1854 and was collected in *The Piazza Tales* in 1856. The text’s geography is the Latin Pacific, from the southern tip of Chile up to

California, and out to the island chain of the Galapagos, the Desenventuradas, and the Juan Fernandez islands. This Pacific is different from the Asia Pacific, as it is repeated throughout the text.

The Encantadas starts with the image of a bounded region of land, “a vacant lot,” and makes it representative of the ocean. (21) Throughout the text, there is a terrestrial-oceanic comparison that demonstrates the text’s sense of the ocean as a region. The encantadas are a place where the history of the Pacific washes up onto its shores, everything from coconuts from tropical islands to the remains of European ships: “charred wood and moldering ribs of wrecks.” (23) The islands both draw ships in and refuse them birth:

Sometimes it is impossible for a vessel from afar to fetch up with the group itself unless large allowances for prospective leeway have been made ere its coming in sight. And yet, at other times, there is a mysterious indraft, which irresistibly draws a passing vessel among the isles, though not bound to them. (23)

True, at one period, as to some extent at the present day, large fleets of whalemens cruised for spermaceti upon what some seamen call the Enchanted Ground.

The Encantadas represents the southern Latin Pacific as a cohesive region of “South American character,” united by similar landscapes, climates, and peoples (32). This region, “the boundless watery Kentucky” is the “entire coast of South America” and the islands off of it. (32) Specifically, “the Encantadas or Galapagos, the isles of St. Felix and St. Ambrose, the isles Juan Fernandez and Massafuero.” (32) These islands are a boundary between the eastern and western Pacific, and “in a peculiar manner, also, they terminate the South American character of country.” (32)

Similarly, in Amasa Delano's Narrative, Melville describes "all the Pacific Ocean, from the equator to thirty degrees south to the distance of a thousand miles off shore," as a cohesive region that "is always tranquil. There are no bad winds, rocks, shoals, or dangers, but a constant south east trade wind." (33)

The sketch goes on to describe the different island chains. The first, "the Encantadas or Galapagos" "needs not here to speak" because it is discussed in the rest of the book. (32) The second set of islands, "St. Felix and St. Ambrose" are said to be "a little above the Southern Tropic, lofty, inhospitable, and uninhabitable rocks." (32) Finally, the island of Juan Fernandez Islands is said to be "sufficiently famous without further description," because of Alexander Selkirk and Daniel Defoe. (32) It is off the island of Santa Maria in the Juan Fernanadez island chains that Benito Cereno will take place. The sketch does describe "Massafuero," which is "is a Spanish name, expressive of the fact that the isle so called lies more without, that is, further off the main than its neighbor Juan." (32) The island is said to be tall and "rugged" with the "air of a vast iceberg drifting in tremendous poise." (32) Melville maps the English gothic onto the island, with a description of it with "sides" that are "split with dark cavernous recesses, as an old cathedral with its gloomy lateral chapels." (32) It is also said that "drawing nigh one of these gorges from sea, after a long voyage, and beholding some tatterdemalion outlaw, staff in hand, descending its steep rocks toward you, conveys a very queer emotion to a lover of the picturesque." (32) This description both lends to the European portrayal of the island and refers to the history of the Juan Fernandez Islands as a hideout for pirates and a penal colony.

The Juan Fernandez Islands have a distinctly European character. This is in keeping with the erasure of indigenous knowledge from this space and the history of violent imperialism. Melville describes the southern Latin Pacific through European history and denies any mention of other lifeways in this region. The paragraph that describes the history of this watery region starts with the date of 1563, the year that Juan Fernandez discovered his namesake islands. In doing so, Melville marks the Pacific with Spanish time and chronology.

Prior to the year 1563, the voyages made by Spanish ships from Peru to Chile were full of difficulty. [...] It was the famous pilot Juan Fernandez, immortalized by the island named after him, who put an end to these coasting tribulations, by boldly venturing the experiment - as De Gama did before him with respect to Europe -- of standing broad out from land. Here he found the winds favorable for getting to the south, and by running westward till beyond the influences of the trades, he regained the coast without difficulty [...] Now it was upon these new tracks, and about the year 1670, or thereabouts, that the Enchanted Isles, and the rest of the sentinel groups, as they may be called, were discovered. Though I know of no account as to whether any of them were found inhabited or no, it may be reasonably concluded that they have been immemorial solitudes. But let us return to Rodondo. (33)

This passage refers to the trade routes along the west coast of the hemisphere, which started in the sixteenth century. From the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, Lima was the capital of the viceroyalty of Peru, which encapsulated almost all of South America. Lima, along with Alcapulco, connected trade in the Asian Pacific to the hemisphere and the Atlantic world. In order to move goods from the Pacific to the Atlantic, the Spanish empire used the Strait of Magellan, as well as overland routes and the trans-isthmian route in Central America. The route around the horn was so

long and difficult that it necessitated stops along the way, in places such as the Juan Fernandez Islands and the port city of Valparaiso, Chile. In the above passage, the use of the word “tracks” refers to the well-worn routes of trade along the west coast of the Americas, on which some of the most profitable commodities—precious metals, whale, fur, and human bodies—circled the Pacific.

In the fourth sketch, “A Pisgah View From the Rock,” the narrator surveys the southern portion of the Latin Pacific, specifically the west coast of the hemisphere and the Juan Fernandez Islands. The title of this sketch uses the word Pisgah, which in Hebrew means summit, to refer to biblical Mount Nebo. In *Deuteronomy*, God commands Moses to climb Mount Nebo and view the Promised Land from its peak. The epigraph of the sketch is from Spenser’s *Faerie Queen* “That done, he leads him to the highest mount,/ From whence, far off he unto him did show.” (*The Encantadas* 31) This title is significant for several reasons. First, Melville connects the Latin Pacific to the Promised Land. This is in keeping with vision of the Latin Pacific as a place of future prosperity. Second, this comprehensive aerial view, in both the bible and the *Encantadas*, demonstrates a mastery of the land, which is oftentimes at the heart of colonialist literature. In keeping, indigenous knowledge of this space is erased.

The discourse of mastery and futurity operates throughout the sketch. In the first paragraph, the narrator describes the Pacific as a frontier and draws a parallel between terrestrial and oceanic frontiers. This oceanic frontier takes on the mythology of the western United States as the narrator describes the Pacific as “a boundless

watery Kentucky. Here Daniel Boone would have dwelt content.” In this passage, “Kentucky” and “Daniel Boone” recall 18th century American frontier mythology and represent the Pacific as a new frontier, a wild place that will soon be tamed, mastered, and known.

V. Conclusion (incomplete)

The Latin Pacific challenges many of the assumptions in the narratives of “early” California. This imagined geography demonstrates that outernational connections were fundamental to the creation of California, which flies in the face of deeply held beliefs of the Anglo American gold rush and Spanish California.

Faxon Atherton’s daughter-in-law, Gertrude Atherton, is curious because she entirely occludes the history of California in the Latin Pacific. Gertrude is known for her fictional writing on Spanish California, but she depicts this as a discrete time and place that is forever in the past. Her writing is exceedingly romantic and places her in a category with some of her contemporaries, including Helen Hunt Jackson. Both Gertrude Atherton and Helen Hunt Jackson depicted Spanish California as a lost past and looked back on it with nostalgia.

The fantasy Spanish heritage is a form of forgetting, and not only does it erase the long and deep history of indigenous peoples in California, but it also isolates California and makes it the island that the Spanish dreamed it to be. By bringing California back into the Latin Pacific context, we see the importance of the hemispheric west in the making of California, and the merit of the Latin Pacific imaginary itself. For Herman Melville, a similar history of forgetting has removed him from the Latin Pacific. The dominant narratives of the Trans-Pacific as Asian Pacific and East-West have obscured other orientations such as South-North and island to island, in which Melville was certainly steeped after reading Richard Henry

Dana Jr., Thomas Beale, and Owen Chase. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the Latin Pacific is a form of forgetting too, a forgetting of indigenous knowledges and the ways of the ocean. It is my hope that future scholars will continue to explore the many layers of the palimpsestic Latin Pacific.

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