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### **Review/Reseña**

Hagimoto, Koichi. *Between Empires: Martí, Rizal, and the Intercolonial Alliance*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

## **Cuba, the Philippines, and Anti-Imperial Alliances**

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The historical exchange between Latin America and Asia dates back to the sixteenth-century Manila Galleons, culminating in 1898 with the Spanish-American War. However, only in the past decade has an impetus toward a trans-Pacific approach emerged in academic departments of Spanish. The late-nineteenth century, with the Cuban War of Independence and the Filipino Propaganda Movement—arguably the most interrogated and researched period in both Cuban/Latin American and Filipino/Asian historiography—presents an excellent springboard to begin examining this

relationship. By focusing on the works of each region's national heroes—Cuban José Martí and Filipino José Rizal—through a transoceanic lens, Koichi Hagimoto's *Between Empires: Martí, Rizal, and the Intercolonial Alliance* deftly explores the *fin de siècle* literature and history of anti-imperialism in Cuba and the Philippines and provides a fresh perspective on familiar topics. This book not only offers an excellent introduction to this emerging field for scholars and students looking to familiarize themselves with one of the major figures in Philippine historiography, but also breaks new ground in the study of Latin American-Asian studies by presenting an inclusive and united vision of the two regions.

Critical studies on the works of both Martí and Rizal are extensive in their respective fields of Latin American studies and Southeast Asian studies, and both have been praised as heroes within discourses of nationalism and anti-colonialism. Although Martí and Rizal never met, nor did they even write about each other, several scholars have pointed out the clear parallels between the two nationalists. As the first systematic comparison of Martí and Rizal, *Between Empires* is timely and stands out in its rigorous and careful examination of their works through an imaginary dialogue. Hagimoto argues that Martí and Rizal—as the most prominent nationalist authors of the two regions—constitute the conceptual framework for an intercolonial alliance against Spain and the United States at the turn of the nineteenth century. Throughout the book, Hagimoto analyzes several of the two writers' most prominent works through the lens of a cross-cultural dialogue and questions the extent to which they create the condition of possibility for a transoceanic alliance against imperial domination.

The central idea of an intercolonial alliance provides one of the richest themes in *Between Empires*. The book's introduction, four well-balanced chapters, and the thought-provoking conclusion, demonstrate a collective consciousness of resistance against Spain and the United States that connect the two writers and “recuperate[s] the lost articulations of the Hispanic world in the late nineteenth century” (18). The first three chapters analyze Martí's and Rizal's anti-imperial literature, and the fourth highlights other historical interactions between Cuba and the Philippines.

In each chapter, Hagimoto's brief synopsis of the works and his informative historical contextualization effectively orient the reader to both the Cuban and Filipino frameworks, subtly but visibly incorporating Filipino literature into the larger Latin American literary and critical tradition.

In his first chapter, "Anticolonial Melodramas: Gender Relations and the Discourse of Resistance in *Noli Me Tangere* and *Lucía Jérez*," Hagimoto examines how Rizal and Martí use melodrama to interrogate Spanish colonialism in Cuba, the Philippines, and Latin America. Through the question of gender relations, Rizal and Martí problematize the Spanish colonial agenda and articulate the possibility of resistance in their respective novels. Hagimoto is wise to begin with Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* (1887), popularly known as the *Noli*. Arguably the most well-known novel in the Filipino literary canon for its instrumental role in the creation of a unified Filipino national identity, knowledge of the *Noli* is essential for any scholar studying the relationship between the Philippines and Latin America/Spain. Using the *Noli* as a frame, the author then examines Martí's only novel, *Lucía Jérez* (1885). In contrast with most contemporary analyses of this narrative, which either tend toward its relation to *modernismo* or focus on the role of gender politics, Hagimoto examines this text through the lens of colonialism, providing a fresh perspective on a familiar text. In dialogue with Doris Sommer's study, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991) which argues that many nineteenth-century romantic novels in Latin America are allegorical representations of the nation or idealized projections of the country's future, the author illustrates how Rizal's and Martí's novels show examples of flexibility and ambiguity on the limits of gender polarities, situating the novels in the context of—and in opposition to—other Latin American nineteenth-century narratives. Reversed gender roles and failed romances found in both Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and Martí's *Lucía Jérez* offer discourses of protest, resistance, and alternative models of a national allegory that challenge the hegemony of Spanish colonialism.

Chapter Two, "Theatrical Performance in the Manifesto: Comparative Analysis of Martí's 'Manifiesto de Montecristi' and Rizal's 'Filipinas dentro de cien años,'" examines the manifestos mentioned in the

chapter's title that seek to rewrite each country's history while simultaneously sketching out an ideal future through an urgent call for revolutionary action. In particular, the author explores how each work aims to define the collective subject in their respective national contexts—for Martí, it is the concept of Cuban "people" that defines the essence of Cuban nationalism, whereas for Rizal, it is the idea of a Filipino "race" that determines the ideal Philippine republic. These ideas of a collective subject anchor each author's notion of political unity among their countries' ethnically diverse populations, creating a coherent model of nationalism.

The richness in Hagimoto's argument comes from his analysis of the theatrical aspect in both Martí's and Rizal's manifestos, underlining a fascinating connection between the performances found in both the manifesto and theater. In the same way that a manifesto constructs an imaginary utopian vision through politically charged words, theater likewise creates an imaginary world through action. In this way, Hagimoto reveals how Martí and Rizal confront the Spanish empire by rewriting their countries' histories and futures in an alternative discourse, constructing ideas of a collective national subject, and attempting to educate and convince readers to participate in the development of nationalization through the theatricality of the manifesto form.

In Chapter Three, "Cuban and Filipino Calibans Confront the Modern Empire," Hagimoto turns to Martí's and Rizal's positive and negative views of the United States' emerging imperialism and the larger framework of the Americas. For example, Hagimoto points out, both authors celebrate the United States' tenets of freedom and progress via industrialization; however, they denounce the threat of American expansionism directed both at Latin America and Asia. Specifically, the chapter analyzes how both Martí and Rizal incorporate the United States into their anti-imperial discourse. After a brief introduction of both authors' experiences and contradictory perceptions of the United States, Hagimoto analyzes three seemingly unrelated essays in Martí's collection of chronicles *Escenas norteamericanas*. In these essays, he shows how the Cuban writer integrates the United States into his narrative of Latin America's force of resistance by expanding Ralph Waldo Emerson's vision

of nature into the idea of the “natural man” (“hombre natural”). For Rizal, on the other hand, Hagimoto examines how the Filipino writer first appropriates Buffalo Bill’s Wild West to form the reformist group that he calls “Fierce Indians” (“Indios bravos”) and later incorporates the figure of a rebellious “filibuster” (“filibuster”) in his second novel, *El filibusterismo*. Hagimoto does an excellent job discussing how and to what extent Martí and Rizal integrate the United States’ cultural history into their own narratives of resistance, discovering sources of anti-imperialism within the United States’ empire itself.

The final chapter, “Conversations across the Pacific: Masonry, Epistolary, and Journal Writing,” moves away from Martí’s and Rizal’s writings and instead focuses on letters, journals, and articles that illustrate the historical interactions between Cuba and the Philippines. Although the transition from the spotlight on Martí and Rizal may seem a little abrupt, the author links their imaginary dialogue to documented, real correspondence between Martí’s and Rizal’s contemporaries, tying together the symbolic inter-colonial alliance examined in the previous three chapters with the material exchanges. Referencing the idea of a “transglobal coordination” between Cubans and Filipinos found in Benedict Anderson’s *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (2005) as a point of departure, the author cogently explores the alliance’s networks and material communications, such as Freemasonry, letter-writing, and articles in newspapers and journals that were directed to and circulated among the sister colonies. These south-south communications regard the Philippines as an integral part in Cuba’s struggle for freedom. Cuba is seen as a model for the Philippines to imitate, and express mutual support and shared concerns across the Pacific. In one of the most in-depth analyses of the historical interplay between Latin America and Asia during the late nineteenth century, Hagimoto illustrates an unmistakable inter-colonial alliance between Cuba, the Philippines, and even Puerto Rico. Evidence of definite interactions between the Caribbean and Asian colonies demonstrates the breadth of Martí’s and Rizal’s influences over their respective colonies and invites further exploration into the relationship between the two regions.

*Between Empires* excels at emphasizing the historical and cultural inter-colonial exchanges by accentuating how the authors and their ideas are connected and by giving a well-balanced account of both Cuba and the Philippines. Hagimoto provides ample primary documents throughout his book, accompanied by crisp, accurate translations, and lets the texts speak for themselves. As a result, the author's insightful observations and reasoning are easy to follow, allowing the book to resonate with diverse audiences. Additionally, Hagimoto displays his theoretical acumen by grappling with a multiplicity of terms and concepts that enrich his analysis. By defining essential terms clearly throughout the text and relegating secondary ones to the endnotes, he avoids being bogged down with excessive jargon. Of particular interest is his emphasis on the necessity of analyzing the inter-colonial alliance "on its own terms within the context of its political agenda instead of viewing [it] through a European lens" (7). The book's spotlight on Martí and Rizal—two iconic authors in their respective fields—makes this text the perfect introduction for scholars interested in the emerging field of the Latin America-Asia relationship. However, for the same reason, one should not mistake this text as an overview of either Cuban or Philippine historiography; rather, it should be considered an in-depth analysis of influential, but specific viewpoints among many diverse and varied perspectives of the time.

For those more familiar with Martí's and/or Rizal's work, Hagimoto's study dialogues with an assortment of scholars in both fields of Latin American/Cuban studies as well as Southeast Asian/Filipino studies, lending a fresh perspective on familiar texts and a stunning bibliography that provides tools for further exploration. Following similar intellectual paths put into place by Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* ([1983] 2006) and Partha Chatterjee's *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993), his work converses well with recent scholarship that rigorously explores studies of nationalism, postcolonialism, subaltern studies, and transoceanic studies, such as Walter D. Mignolo's *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, Border Thinking* (2000), Adam Lifshey's *The Magellan Fallacy: Globalization and the Emergence of Asian and African Literature in Spanish* (2012), and Megan C. Thomas'

*Orientalists, Propagandists, Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism* (2012).

Ultimately, with its deft illumination of transoceanic relationships within discourses of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, Hagimoto's book should have great appeal to scholars and students of Spanish, American, Latin American, and Southeast Asian studies, as well as those interested in the formation of empire, nation, and subject, especially in the nineteenth century. Expertly researched and lucidly written, Hagimoto's work is invaluable in bridging Pacific cultural exchanges and succeeds in encouraging further work that places the Latin American and Philippine literary traditions in dialogue.